INTERVIEW WITH MR. AND MRS. ELMER CIOCCA

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Conducted by:

Dr. James L. Dodson

--and--

Miss Catherine McNeil

[tape 1 side 1]

Dodson: Mr. Ciocca, I wonder if you'd tell us your full name and how long you have lived in the valley?

Ciocca: My name is Elmer Ciocca, I was born in Burbank. I've lived here in the valley all my life, 54 years.

Dodson: And I believe you have the distinction that nobody else that we've interviewed has had, that you've lived on the side of our present college. Is that correct?

Ciocca: That's right, I spent the first 35 years of my life there.

Dodson: When did you move away from ~~that~~ site?

Ciocca: It was in 1950, about 1950. After the college... the city took over our property, we leased the ranch or the home from the city for about 2 years. And then we both, my father and I, moved.

Dodson: Now as I understand it, there were several families that owned parts of that tract. Which part exactly did your family owned?

Ciocca: Well, our property was 20 acres, and it ran down Fulton down to Ethel and extended... the southern boundary was approximately 300 feet north of Burbank Boulevard.

Dodson: Can you mention some of the names of some of the other people who owned land there?

Ciocca: Well there was the uh... our immediate neighbor was Mr. Bundy. Mr. Bundy had a chicken farm there. And Mr. Gahan who had an apricot grow. And down on the southern of... no, it was on the eastern edge of our property along Ethel, there was a Mr. ...?... who had a turkey ranch there. And most of the land there was either in a 5... 2½, 5, and 10 acre partials and everybody either raised rabbits or grew a lot of fruit mostly fruit.

McNeil: What was the northern boundary of your ranch?

Ciocca: The northern boundary? The northern boundary was at it was approximately uh, oh I'd say fifteen to sixteen hundred feet north of Burbank. And it ran between Burbank... between Fulton and Ethel. Our range in property as I remember was six hundred and... uhm wait a minute... I think it was six hundred and sixty feet, something like that. But it was uh, it was just near Burbank and Fulton, but there was a strip from the southern part of our place along Burbank Boulevard of about 300 feet... we were just north of that.

Dodson: Most of the things that were there in your day had gone, but there is one tree I understand, still there. Do you remember that tree and where it is?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, that big eucalyptus tree that was situated right in the middle of Mr. Bundy's poultry farm, right there on Burbank Boulevard just north of Ethel.

Dodson: I can add that that tree is at the corner of what is now our museum, bungalow 15, which was our first

college administration building. So we're glad to know that that tree is at least one of the relics of the early days. How many cattle did you have in your dairy, Mr. Ciocca?

Ciocca: Oh, we milked about 100... between 100 and 120 and of course that was our milking stock. And we had a lot of young... young cattle too.

Dodson: You were telling us a little about the water situation. You had an Artesian well, did you? Or a well that you pump, rather?

Ciocca: Well we had our own water at the beginning we used to have a well that we pumped for our place. And later on in years we went to using city water. But our pump was still there with an opening on the ground with what you might say about 8 to 10 feet across, with a concrete lip on the top of it. And we built a little shed around it so nobody could get in there, any kids get in there and fall in. But during the wet years, like the early 40's, the water table got so high there that the water actually come up to the top to the ground. If it hadn't been for the foot, or 18 inches, of concrete lip on the edge of it, the water would've flowed over right over the top.

Dodson: This is sort of news to us, because we didn't know there was a well somewhere... close to the middle of our college campus. I'm glad to find that out.

McNeil: Where was the well located exactly? Where about?

Ciocca: The well? It was located just about the middle of the campus there if you used the uh, Ethel as your

east, Fulton as your west, Burbank your south, and Oxnard your north. It would approximately be at the middle of that tract there.

McNeil: But it was... it was north of where on... Hillcrest would intersect the the path that went down to Fulton on your property, is that correct?

Ciocca: Yeah, that's right. It's just north of where Hillcrest would come into Fulton. You would go north about 300 feet... two to three hundred feet, and then on a direct line east about half-way to Ethel.

Dodson: Can you tell us about some of the other crops that were raised on that tract? And other types of life that was there? I think, there was a poultry farm for one thing? Did you say there was some walnut groves there?

Ciocca: Yes, there was quite a few... there was a lot of walnuts, not particularly in that tract where the college is, but there were a lot of walnut groves around. And most of the uh, fruit in that area was peaches, apricots, plums, uh... more or less the deciduous fruits. And they were just a small 2½ to 5 acres partial with people owned the land. There was no other use, they had no other use for it in those days except to plant some fruit trees.

Dodson: We have a flood control channel now, very close to the college. Did you have any trouble from flooding, as aside from the time that you were talking about, of the water table getting so high?

Ciocca: Well yes, in '38, that was quite an experience down here in that area... in 1938 when we had the

flood. That was in the first few days in March. That used to be a dry river bed, where the Hollywood freeway is now, it was a dry river bed. We used to uh, when we were young kids we used to spend a lot of time down there. We built bonfires, have weenie roasts, and there were big cotton trees and it was a beautiful place. Then came '38 when we had that that water came down through there. It took out all the bridges with it, all the bridges between north up Sherman Way... it took out all the bridges clear down to Los Angeles River. The only way you could get across was Burbank Boulevard because there was a real low bridge and that was the only east-west access street in the valley at that time. And it was quite... it did quite a bit of damage. Mr. ...?... who had the turkey ranch there on the west... on the east side of Ethel lost about two or three thousand turkeys in that flood, it took them down the river. There were just a lot of damage. And that was the last that we ever saw of the beautiful river bed because the flood just ruined it.

Dodson: You didn't have any loss of cattle as the result of that particular flood then?

Ciocca: No, the water never really came as far as our place. It was mostly... it just came to about where Ethel is. Between Ethel and the Hollywood freeway is where they took most of the damage.

Dodson: Can you think of anything else about the college tract which you'd like to tell us about?

Ciocca: Well, of course I've spent most of my life there. And I've had quite a few experiences. We uh, it was a great life, a great way to live. And I would

give anything to go back to that type of life today. And we had a lot of sad times. You know that living on a farm that things are going to happen to you. As young kids, you're going to get hurt and between me and my brother we had our error. I broke a leg and he lost a toe all on account of uh, playing around you know. He was leading a horse one time and the horse stepped on his foot and off went his toe! And I was in the horse barn and they were trying to take off a collar of a horse one time, he had sores on his neck and they were trying to get this collar off of him. And when they did, he came flying out of that barn and I was sitting in the doorway watching. And when he came out of that barn, he was kicking in all directions and I'm making for the fence. And I got over the fence all right, but when I come down I came down the wrong way on my leg and I broke my leg. And then I was laid up for three months. We had a lot of rough times but it was real fun! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: At the time that we moved to the college site, you had already sold your ranch to someone else, is that true? We didn't actually buy it from the Ciocca family?

Ciocca: No, it was actually... it was out of our hands about 19... in the late '30s. I can't remember if it was '37 or '38... right at the end of the Depression. It was when my father wasn't able to hand on to it because things were really tough in those days. There was just no market for milk and he just couldn't hang on to the place. It was a real shame.

Dodson: But you did lease it back and still did continue to live there for a while, is that right?

Ciocca: Oh yes, we lived there until the school... as I say, until the school bought it. And then... even two years after that we stayed there, until they needed the property for their buildings.

Dodson: Now before you came in, Mrs. Ciocca was telling us that there was once a raid on the ranch. Can you tell us about that raid?

Ciocca: Yeah, that was in the Prohibition days, that was really something. We used to have silos, you see in the picture, we used to put corn in there... ground up corn and they would blow it up with a machine, it would blow it up in the pipe on the outside of the silo. And then when this corn was ferment, it would be gargled up green naturally, and then when it ferment it would make quite an odor. So one night... about four oh four o'clock in the morning here, all the revenners [sp. ?] came in on all sides. And they cornered my dad and they wanted to know where the still was. And my dad said, "I don't have a still." "Well, there's something around here because you can smell that corn silage." Ha ha... it would've made good corn liquor for sure! But after searching the place for about three hours, they finally came to the conclusion, "No, it must be the silo and the corn in there."

Dodson: That's rather interesting that our site was once the site of a possible raid for bootlegging. Ha ha ha... You didn't have any other brushes with the police at your ranch, I take it then?

Ciocca: No, not really. That was the closest we ever got. And everybody got a big kick out of that. And it

was always talked about for years afterwards.

Dodson: Were your mother and father born in this country? Or did they come from Italy?

Ciocca: No, both my parents were born in Italy. My mother came over here when she was three years old, her family brought her when she was three. My father came over here when he was about twenty-one, I believe, I think that's what he told me once. He was twenty-one, just a young man. And he came over here and he settled in El Monte, that's where his brother was at the time. That's the only reason he came to California because the only relative he had here was his brother. And he settled in El Monte, and from El Monte he moved to the valley in 1912. And he worked for a man down on uh, Riverside Drive and Woodman. They had a dairy there and he worked for him until he saved enough money to buy this uh, this place here on Fulton.

Dodson: Can you tell us what caused him to come to the valley for the first time? Instead of staying in the El Monte area?

Ciocca: Well, at that time there were a lot of... it seemed like a lot of the Italian people were moving... were coming out here to the valley. It seemed like I could remember most of the dairymen were Italian as I recall. In fact, about four-fifths of them I guess were Italian. And then he... over there it was more or less already settled, and he wanted to come out here because this was considered way out in the wild blue yonder, and the land was cheap, and eventually he wanted to settle. It was a lot cheaper, the property was a lot cheaper here than

it was in valley... er in the in the over there in El Monte.

Dodson: I see. Can you tell us about the people who worked on your ranch? Were they Italian or were they different nationalities?

Ciocca: Oh no, we had everything working there. We had uhm, you name it and we had it. There was Portuguese and German, and Spanish, and Italian, my dad had everybody in that place, you know. And most of them were from the old country . You know, they were immigrants. They came out here in the great immigration they had from Europe. And they were hard working people. I had to say that for them, thank God we had people like that in those days. Because I don't know whether they can get people that work that hard anymore, but you had to hand it to them anyway.

Dodson: Since you have mentioned that they were hard working, can you tell us what the work day consisted of? How early would they begin work? And how long would they work?

Ciocca: Well, a work day for a milker, for instance, it'd be ... the men that milked the cows... at that time, in the beginning actually, it was done by hand. Later came in the machine. But in the beginning, for many years, it was done by hand. And the work day started for them about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. It was a split day, you might say. They worked from 2 and 6, both in the morning and in the afternoon. And that was 7 days a week, 365 days a year... never a day off.

Dodson: When you said 2 and 6, did you mean 2 a.m. to 6 a.m.

as one shift?

Ciocca: That's right, 2 to 6 morning, 2 to 6 in the afternoon.

Dodson: I wanted to be sure about that. I see Cathy is making a terrible face at those hours. I don't think you could have hired her. Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: No, I don't think you could hire most anybody nowadays to work those kind of hours. Especially for the, you know, for the money they made... it was really hard.

Dodson: Can you tell us about what money they did make? What sort of wages were paid for those hours?

Ciocca: Well the average wage, I'd say... during the '30s especially, would be room and board and approximately $60 a month.

McNeil: The hands would actually live on the ranch, wouldn't they?

Ciocca: Yes, that's right. Both the milkers and the hands that worked in the field... we had a bunkhouse and they actually live right there. And they're paid, including their room and board. As I say, the milkers with the average of $60 room and board, and the ranch hands were getting about $30 to $35 a month, room and board.

McNeil: Would they have their own grape orchards around there so they can make wine? I know you mentioned something about that before.

Ciocca: Yes, we had approximately 4 to 5 acres of grapes that we used to use strictly for the production of wine. Because as I say, most of these people came from Europe were very... their meal consisted of wine. And that was twice a day, for your lunch, which they called dinner, and supper... you always have a bottle for each man. And this wasn't a meal without wine. So we used to produce our own wine, oh approximately 10 barrels... it would be five to six hundred gallons a year.

McNeil: Where did you make the wine? Where was it kept?

Ciocca: Well we actually made it in the barn. We had a... at the beginning when I was a young boy, I could remember watching them make it, and they made it in the old way which you've probably heard about. Where they get a big tank, and they'd get on the top of this tank... and they'd take their shoes off and put boots on and tromp around on the grapes. And that is actually the way they made it. For years, I could remember them doing that. And a batch would probably hold oh... eight, eight, nine hundred gallons. Naturally they would fill it, they had grapes... but that is the way they actually made it, with their feet.

Dodson: Sometimes I've been asked, when students hear about that, whether they washed their feet first or not. Can you give us a comment on that one?

Ciocca: Oh, it didn't really make any difference. By the time that stuff fermented and got so hot, whatever was there was dead anyway.

Dodson: Ha ha ha... I see. Well, uh...

Mrs. Ciocca: ... talk about the guys that were singing in the tree.

Ciocca: ... was one of our hands.

McNeil: Is that right?

Ciocca: Well we used to have like somebody mentioned, one of our... one of our ranch hands had a bit too much of that wine, and the things they used to do. Well we had this one particular old man, we used to call him "Frenchy". He came from France, and typical Frenchman you know, with a little beard, a real nice old man. Had a big cane he used to walk around. And he used to be a pruner, he liked to prune grapes. That was his trade, actually. Well once a year he used to come by and pruned our grape vineyard down there. So my dad would actually give him all the wine he wanted. As I say, sometimes you get too much of that that bit of red. And at night he'd start singing! And he would sing and sing and then well it wasn't enough... he'd get up on one of those trees we had there by the house. And he'd sing in French, just at loud as he could. Well, my dad would take about three hours or that and then he'd go outside and he'd start hollering at him. He'd say, "Come on down now!," he said, "we all had to get some sleep!" But that was just one of the things that used to happen, and we used to get a big kick out of him. He was sure a nice man, I wonder what ever happened to him.

Dodson: Did you have many neighbors around the ranch at that time? Or was there quite a bit of open space in that area?

Ciocca: Oh, it was quite... it was quite open. I mean, there were... I would say between uh, I would say between uhm, Burbank and Oxnard, along Fulton there, was probably 8 to 10 houses on the whole boulevard. And maybe the same along Ethel. Most of the ground was, as I say, 2½ to 5 to 10 acres... so there wasn't too many homes in that area.

McNeil: It was mostly alfalfa or corn there, wasn't there?

Ciocca: Well, that was our major crop, was alfalfa and corn. We uh, naturally we had to fill a silo every year, we used to lease quite a bit of land around there. On the west side of Fulton there, we used to lease this ground from Mr. Whitsett, who was the founder of Van Nuys. He owned quite a bit of land there. We used to lease the land from him, plant corn. And then we also had, where KNPC Tower are now, on the east side of Hollywood freeway... we leased that land when it belonged to... I forget the man's name, we leased that and used it for our alfalfa lot. In all total, we probably leased forty acres beside what we had and we probably leased maybe forty acres for corn.

McNeil: Whereabouts was the grape orchards located? Can you remember? Was it above the water pump?

Ciocca: The grape... no, the vineyard was just south of the water pump. It started right at the water pump and it went south to where the picture was taken. And then it went east, about three acres there. You can't... you can't quite see it in that photograph because it's right behind where the camera actually is. There were about three to four acres of it, on

the slope there... it was actually a slope, it wasn't level, there was actually a slope there and that was all in grapes.

Dodson: The picture to which we're refering to is the one on exhibition in our museum of the college site, taken about 18... er 1932, rather. Cathy?

McNeil: Was the grape vineyard then, east of Ethel? Or did it stop at Ethel?

Ciocca: No, it was actually west of Ethel. It was right in the middle of the property, and it ran to the north edge toward the cattle you see in the picture. It was a little section about four acres there.

Dodson: You were refering to the different nationalities that worked on the ranch. Did any of the Japanese settlers, in the early days, worked on the ranch?

Ciocca: No. There were... although there were some Japanese there in fact, there were a family in that tract. They lived down Ethel, near Oxnard. And they were, Japanese were mostly involved with raising vegetables. They were strictly in the lettuce, or uh, the vegetables, lettuce, onions, things like that. It was a lot of work, and of course they're hardworking people and they can get a crop out of anything. And they were quite industrious.

McNeil: Can you tell us something about the lettuce ranch that way across the street? You said that you used to go over there when you were kids?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, the lettuce it was the lettuce packing plant.

Yes, see on... as you went down Burbank Boulevard, once you passed Van Nuys Boulevard. From Van Nuys Boulevard to Sepulveda, all were mostly in lettuce. And there was quite a lot of lettuce grown in that area. Well they had a packing shift, where they used to ship it... pack it in railroad cars and ship it. And this packing shift was right along... near the lumber yard, where Neiman-Reed's lumber yard is, on Fulton and Burbank... well it's across on the other side of that little railroad track that runs there, is where the packing ship is located in. And they used to pack approximately eight to ten boxcars a day, or lettuce and it was all hand-packed. And they used to pack it with ice in the cars. And when we were kids we used to spend a lot of time over there during lettuce season. Because all of this guarded lettuce, they would have soft heads, all the things they couldn't pack and ship back east... they used to put it in big trucks. And when they had this truck loaded, they used to bring it to our place and dump it in the corrals for the cows. And the cows, for about two months in the year, would get stuffed with lettuce which was great feed for the cows. They enjoyed it very much. And we used to ride back and forth in the truck and eat lettuce, and when it came to dinner time we couldn't eat nothing else.

Dodson: There was an additional railroad track there that isn't there now, is that right? Did this track run into what is now the track to the college?

Ciocca: Yes, there were the spur lines that ran off of that railroad line that runs toward Van Nuys, after it passes Fulton. There was a little spur line that

that ran across this packing ship. And it ran for approximately oh 300 yards, and then it came back to the main line again. And then on that spur line that's where they used to store their little box cars for their packing ship.

Dodson: The lettuce wasn't put in the regular refrigerator cars then? It was in regular freight cars?

Ciocca: That's right. It was in what they called a refrigerator car at that time, but it was all... it was strictly ice, everything was ground up. All the lettuce, when it was packed in a crate, was put down in layers. And between each layer of lettuce they would put in approximately four or five inches of crushed ice. And when they got the crate full, they would put ice on top of it, and then put a lid on that, and then pack them in these cars. They would pack them in these cars, two or three layers at a time, and then more ice, and more ice, and then when they got through, they would have the whole car that's jammed with crushed ice. And that's the way they had to ship it in order for it to survive to the east coast.

McNeil: Can you tell something about the cattle corral that's in the photograph, next to the spur?

Ciocca: Oh yes, that was at the north end of the... of the picture there. It was a... it was a circular corral that they... that they... that the railroad had put up, that they used for overnight cattle that they were hauling. They would unload them and leave them in this corral so they can move around, and that's where they were fed. And they would keep them there overnight before they continue to where-

ever they were taking them to.

Dodson: Now, was that cattle uh... were those cattle raised in the valley? Or brought from somewhere else?

Ciocca: No, they were usually being shipped from somewhere else. And I... as I remember it, they were mostly beef cattle, they weren't dairy cattle.

Dodson: So they were actually being taken east for slaughtering purposes, I take it then, is that right?

Ciocca: I would say, either some were being brought east, taken east, and some might have been brought into the valley to pasture to the north or west end.

McNeil: Didn't you say that when you were a kid you'd go down there and filled caves in your corral? Could you tell us about that?

Ciocca: Oh, we were quite the cave dwellers when we were kids. We dig caves... and the tree house. We loved to dig caves and build tree houses. And I guess between this neighbor boy and I, we must have dug fifteen caves and gosh knows how many treehouses! Every time we saw a tree, the first thing we had to do was go up there and see what kind of a tree house you could build in it. And we used to build some elaborate caves, especially up around where this corral is because it was railroad property and we weren't getting into anybody's hair. Or getting them upset because we were drilling holes into their ground, it belonged to the railroad. And we used to build some pretty nice big caves up there, we can walk around in it, in fact.

McNeil: What would you use to dig out your caves?

Ciocca: What we used? We used a plain old shovel. And I mean, we would work! You wouldn't believe that two kids would work that hard to dig a cave!

McNeil: About how old were you?

Ciocca: Oh we were anywhere, I think... as I remember, we were between 9 and 12, 13... right around that time.

Dodson: I'd imagine nowadays, the LAPD would make you cover it up for fear that it would fall in on you or something of the kind. In those days they didn't care, is that right or didn't they interfere?

Ciocca: That's true. I mean, just like the tree house. We used to build tree houses and the police would come by and they would just be watching us building them, you know, and no, nobody cared. I mean, it was really a lot freer society and open in those days.

Mrs. Ciocca: California went to ....?...

Ciocca: Oh well, you know, in those days we never... we weren't much for eating dinner. Everything was raised around there. You went and ate sweet potatoes, it wouldn't matter raising sweet potatoes. They grew a lot of cantaloupes. Tomatoes were quite plentiful in the summer time. So actually, what we do is carry salt shaker around in our pocket. Because whatever we wanted... tomatoes? we had salt shaker for it, or cantaloupes... and it was the best way in the world to get the freshest fruit.

Dodson: The owners weren't too particular in those days if you took a little, is that right?

Ciocca: No, not really. I mean there was an abundance of everything and they really didn't care. The fact of the matter is, when they used to get through picking sweet potatoes especially, I can remember this... Well, they'd harvest them and then in fall, the first little rain would come along you would see a sprout come out of the peel. Well where that little sprout was, you'd dig down and you'd find the sweet potato. So we'd... after they get done picking, we couldn't wait for the first shower to come along and those potatoes would start sprouting. Because we'd get the wagon, just a little wagon, you know, that kids pull around... and we'd go out there and we'd start digging the potatoes and some of them were huge! And we used to go around the neighborhood and sell em. I can't... I'll never forget that, we used to sell 'em 4 pounds for 10¢.

McNeil: Would that pertain to the vegetable stand that was across the street?

Ciocca: On Ethel...

McNeil: On Ethel and Burbank? Could you tell us about that?

Ciocca: Yeah, that belonged to uh, I, that belonged to a man named Mr. Walker. And he had property on the southeast corner of that intersection, he had quite a bit of land there. And he used to raise a lot of vegetables, different vegetables. But he raised them for market, that was downtown... where they shipped them down town. But he also had this little stand there where he would sell road-side, for people

who stopped by and wanted a few tomatoes, and corn, and whatever it may be.

McNeil: What about the railroad hoboes? Do you have any stories about them?

Ciocca: Well, during the Depression days it was really tough. I can remember those uhm, there used to be a lot of them... you see them everyday. Everyday that the hoboes... and they come by to the farm. And naturally there'd be a farm and a lot of them would come over and a lot of them would want something to do. They'd want to know if there's anything they could do to earn a meal. That's all they wanted, just a meal... they'd cut wood, mow the... cut weeds, whatever you'd want them to do, feed cows. And it was really sad. My dad used to help them a lot but we also had hired people to do that job and you can only do so much. But I can remember that he'd... even a girl, a young couple one time came... er walk in the tracks and they couldn't have been more than in their early twenties and....

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Dodson: We were talking about the Depression, can you tell us what effects it had on the neighbors that you had and the other people in the immediate community? Were they hard hit by it?

Ciocca: Oh yes, the Depression was really tough. There were just... people were just... there were just no jobs. I mean, there was nothing for people to do. And of course in our area, everybody raised their own chickens, they had their own rabbits, they raised most of

their own food. So it wasn't as hard on the people that had the land there as the people that were living near a city. In our area, no it wasn't too tough. Of course myself and our family wasn't really... we never even noticed it because we raised everything ourselves. We raised our own meat, we had our own butter, cheese, eggs, and chickens, rabbits... so it really wasn't too bad for us. But I was thinking about the people that used to walk the tracks. We used to call them the people that walked the tracks because that's how it was everyday. How tough it was for them! When there wasno jobs, no homes, no place for them to go! They would work just for a meal. It wasn't... they didn't ask for any money, just for a meal! And the young couples... that this young married couple in their early twenties came by, wanted to work for a meal... I can't never forget my folks, especially my mother feeling so sorry for this girl. And... and.."Sure,"she says, "you come in and have dinner with us." But they were great ones for having everybody in the house for dinner. I mean, in those days everybody... just like kids, everybody raises everybody else's kids. Whereever you were at lunch or dinner time, that's where you'll have your dinner.

Dodson: You were going to tell us about the earthquakes, or one of the earthquakes... I think. Which one were you going to tell us about?

Ciocca: Well I was thinking... the one that I vividly remember and the one that sticks in my mind is the one in '33. We had a quite a shake in '33. That was the one they called the Long Beach earthquake, but it was quite a roll out here too. I was out in the field.

It was in late afternoon. I'll never forget, I was out in the field, just right by the silo that you see in the picture. I was in that alfalfa field, setting gopher traps. And uh, I'll never forget, I heard this rumble... it was just a rumble, a deep rumble first. And I felt the ground shake and as I looked up... I was walking west... and I looked up for a bolt and I see the ground coming at me like an ocean swell, like you see a swell out in the ocean before it breaks. Well that's just the way the ground came at me. And I'll never forget, when it got to me... I just went "whoop!" and I sit down right on the ground. And I glanced right over to the silo. And that silo was... it wasn't swaying, it was bending just like you would a piece of spaghetti. And how in the world that thing ever stayed up, I don't know. But that's the first thing I looked at the silo and I couldn't believe that it was still standing.

Dodson: Well that's amazing! That's the first description we have of the rolling effect it had on the land, for people that we have interviewed. Did it do any damage to the ranch? To the buildings?

Ciocca: No, actually it was... it wasn't a real... like I said, it was a roller. It wasn't like a shock, like we had here in the San Fernando quake. This was a roller and it didn't really do any damage. I remember my mother lost every dishes in the kitchen... they come flying out of the cupboard. But other than... on the outside, no there really wasn't any damage.

McNeil: Uhm, could you tell us about the history of the pho-

tograph that we have of your family? On the barn, er... on the ranch?

Ciocca: Well that was uhm, yeah that was quite a story. You know, that was taken during the tough times, naturally. And I can remember this photographer came over and he wanted to take a picture of the ranch. So my dad said, "Well, how much are you going to charge me?" And the guy says, "Forty dollars." Well my dad says, "Are you kidding? Forty dollars? I could feed everybody here for a month for forty dollars! No," he says, "I can't pay forty dollars for it." Well, it's the old deal, you know, you... it still works today. "Oh come on," he says,"just let me take it. I'll take it for nothing, I just want to get the picture." So my dad says O.K. all right, if just to get the picture, fine. So that's why they posed for it. And he took it, and he didn't charge them nothing for it. And he said,"Good bye and I'll see you." Well, about a month later he comes by with this picture. And there it is. So naturally he said, do you want to see what the place looks like? And my dad says, "Yeah, I'd like to see it." So he laid out this photograph and my dad says, "Yeah it's nice, I sure like that!" And the guys says, "You sure you don't want it?" "No," he says, "I can't afford that kind of money." So, you know, between the two of them it finally got down to "How much would you give me for it?" And my dad said, "Well I'd give you ten dollars for it." So the guys said, "O.K., sold!" He got it for ten dollars.

Dodson: Of course, actually, that was quite a bit of money at the time, was it not?

Ciocca: Well, that's what I say. Ten dollars... you'd better believe it, ten dollars. You used to take ten dollars and go shopping for six people for a week!

Dodson: Yes, I was going to say the purchasing power of that ten dollar would have been uh, many times more than the purchasing power of the ten dollars now. So that wasn't really a low price!

Ciocca: No, that's true.

Dodson: You mentioned shopping, where did you do your shopping at that time?

Ciocca: Well, uhm. There wasn't really some supermarkets like you have today. I remember the only place you could go to was nothing like... you had Van Nuys and then you have North Hollywood, there was nothing in between. You went to there, you went to Reseda and Canoga Park, and that was your towns. So you had to go to either Van Nuys or North Hollywood. And you went to the market in Van Nuys. I can remember one market, it was Boulanger's ... it was there for years and years. And uh, and there was the ...?... market on Van Owen Street, but you do most of the shopping inthe towns. There was no in-betweens.

McNeil: Where was Boulanger's located in Van Nuys? Do you remember?

Ciocca: Yes, it was located on Van Nuys Boulevard just sath of Sylvan.

McNeil: Were you living in the valley when North Hollywood

was called Lankershim?

Ciocca: Well, when I was young that was what it was known as, Lankershim, yes. A lot of the towns which names have changed. We had Owensmouth, and Girard and then we have Lankershim.

McNeil: I have heard that Lnakershim was known for its peach growing, do you remember as that as being the primary things of the area?

Ciocca: Peaches, yes. The whole west of... the whole area east of where the college is, there was a great deal of peaches, all along Chandler Boulevard. It was all peach orchards from uhm, oh I'd say Ethel? almost clear to Lankershim. From both sides of Chandler was mostly peaches. That was a great area for growing peaches, with a sandy soil... peaches seem to do wonderful on sandy soil.

Dodson: Can you tell us a little bit about your education in the valley? You went to local schools, did you?

Ciocca: Yes, I went to both Van Nuys grammar school and I graduated from Van Nuys High School. I graduated from Van Nuys High School in the winter of 1942. And actually that was the beginning of the war and that's where my education stopped, right there. I wasn't in the service, my brother went into the service. But I was working at the time at my dad's ranch, on the dairy. And I was frozen there, that's where I had to stay after I spent the whde entire war... there with the cattle.

Mrs. Ciocca: He even tried to uhm, enlist up in Washington and

they wouldn't take him. He went up there and they sent him back here for his records.

Dodson: You were doing work which were, which was considered to be essential to war efforts, I think, at the time.

Ciocca: Well that was it. Even though I was 21 years old, and single, and fancy-free and all that, I was considered essential, right... but at the same time. I happen to be in the state of Washington when I registered for the draft, and then when they sent a questionaire on what I was doing, I told them that I was working on the dairy with a hundred whatever... a hundred twenty or thirty cows. If I had registered here in Los Angeles, they wouldn't have made a scene. But up in the state of Washington, it seems that if you had a hundred and thirty cows you had a big dairy. And they must need you awful bad!

Dodson: Do you remember the rounding up of the Japanese, here in the valley? And how that affected you, or did it? Did you know any of those families?

Ciocca: Yes, in fact they were our neighbors... right to the north side of us. There was a neighbor there that had a Japanese couple working for them, he was the caretaker and she was the maid. Yes, I remember that very well, they sent them people to... I think they sent them to New York. Some of them were sent here to the Toluca Lake area, but as I remember it they sent those Japanese couple to New York. And it was kind of tough during the war time really. I remember we had blackouts. You know, every so often we had blackouts, we had to turn off all the lights. Well a blackout... we were milking cows at two o'clock

in the morning, out one morning, I remember. And uh, they have a blackout. Well this... one of these uh, fellows we got... I forget now, but he was a Spaniard or a Portuguese, but anyways they all liked to sing as I remember. Anyways, they were milking cows at two o'clock in the morning and all the lights were supposed to be out. Well he's got everything going full blast there in the barn, and he's singing at the top of his lungs. And here comes the air raid wardens, you know, and they came up to him and said, "Hey, don't you know the blackout?" Well you know, they don't understand English too well. And this man said, "Black cows ? Why of course, I've got a lot of black cows..." And he said, "No no no, it's a blackout! You've got to turn your lights off." So this... he didn't know what to do so he turns off and said, "I'll milk cows in the dark, what's the difference?" So he proceeded to turn the lights off and proceeded to sing and milk cows in the dark.

Dodson: Did that situations of the blackouts caused many accidents? Traffic accidents and that sort of thing, to your knowledge?

Ciocca: No, not really. It was kind of really... everybody took it in their stride. I was caught in blackouts two or three times. I remember once, I was in the middle of North Hollywood and you had to run around with your... uh, when the siren went off you'd pull off... you'd pull off the road and stop. That was it. Turn everything off. And it wasn't really too bad. Of course I'm young, I couldn't care less. Because I was a young fella, it was fun for me. But no, it wasn't no hardships.

Dodson: I think people in inland there is, probably didn't realize just the situation that could arise with a blackout. I remember once finding myself drive the car down the sidewalk in Galveston Texas during a blackout! Afterall no lights on, no headlights on, it was difficult to tell whether you were in the street or on the sidewalk. But apparently you didn't have experiences just like that.

Ciocca: No, we uh... I never did. Everytime I got in one I stopped. I didn't care where I was. If all they wanted me to do was sit there, I sit there. I never had any problem.

McNeil: In the 30's, what was the main mode of say, mass transportation. Was it buses, or trains, did they have planes, or... what was it?

Ciocca: No, what we had here in the valley was really great. And you see, everybody's heard about the big red cars. The big read cars that they used to run down Los Angeles. Well we had that red car here in the valley, which was our main means of transportation. It ran along Chandler Boulevard, all the way from downtown came up to Chandler Boulevard and went to Van Nuys, went up to uh, which is Canoga Park, they called it Owensmouth. And everybody used the red car. And it was the easiest and cheapest way to get around.

Dodson: Was there one line that ran out towards San Fernando too? To the mission area?

Ciocca: Yes. That was the other one, that ran up Brand Boulevard. Up San Fernando, up Brand Boulevard, and

the other went up to Canoga Park.

Dodson: What was the route that the one going to San Fernando used? Do you recall what streets it went up?

Ciocca: It went straight up Van Nuys Boulevard all the way to Brand. And then it turned right and followed Brand.

Dodson: I see. Can you tell us anything about the type of social life that teenagers usually had in the valley, when you were in your teens. What did they do for amusements?

Ciocca: Well, there really wasn't a lot to do. The beach was our big thing, it probably still is with the young kids. Our big thing was the beach and the pipe down there. They had Oceanpark, which was a pier, and they had Venice pier and they had all kinds of amusements. It was like a Disneyland, but it was all out on the pier! They had chute the Chute slide, they had roller coasters, they had the whole thing. They had the fun houses, and that was the big thing with us kids... was to go down to the beach, spend the day fishing on the pier, and at night we'd go on the pike and have our fun. And also we had weenie roasts, it was allowed in those days, which they don't allow now. We used to have bonfires and weenie roasts and a whole gang of kids would go down there and spend an evening with the weenie bakes. And then here in the valley, we always... fishing was a great thing. That was when the L.A. river was a river. I mean, it wasn't a big river but there was water in it.

Dodson: Then you did have water flowing in it at that time?

Ciocca: Oh yes, water flowed year-round in the L.A. river. It was all pussywillows, trees... it was beautiful, it was a big wide creek. And every so often you have a big pool. And where they had the blue water-fall and the big pool was where everybody used to swim. I'll never forget the... an area down there where let's see now... now it's where they cross Laurel Canyon. Just west of Laurel Canyon, there was a monstrous pool there ! All the kids used to go swimming there and fishing there. We used to catch all kinds of sunfish, bass, and crawdads. I'll never forget the crawdads... that was one of our ways of making money, catching crawdads, cray-fish... what they used to call crawdads. We'd catch them with a string and a piece of liver, was all we used. And we'd catch them by the hundreds and we'd sell them to frog farms. There was a frog farm near valley on Valleyheart Drive there. And we used to sell those crayfish to the frog farm. And they used to pay us a half a cent a piece for them.

McNeil: Would the high schools or the community put on like community dances for the teenagers of the time? Anything like that?

Ciocca: They had their dance, they had their proms, just like they do today. And uh, but they didn't... no it wasn't too much as I remember. The dancing was mostly downtown. We had the Paladium, and with those dance halls. Down on the pier they had the ...?... ballroom, they had three or four other dance halls on the Pike.

McNeil: Well I'm just interested, if you were a teenager under twenty-one, was there really that much social-

izing that you can do? Like going out to the ballrooms to go dancing and things like that?

Ciocca: Oh yes, that was the thing. Actually, like I say, most of the teenagers... there was a great interest in dancing as I went out when I was young. It seemed a lot more so than today. And then there were actually more dance halls, more places for young people to go than there is today. Wouldn't you say, dear?

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh I don't know, I mean now. I mean, you've got to consider the population of today compared to what it was in those days. You know, that's about all the entertainment they did have... was the little social gatherings, you know, and or parties, private parties like the Halloween festivals and so forth. That's about it.

McNeil: Was there very much drinking at the time or uh, teenagers get high, or anything like that?

Ciocca: Uh yeah, they they used to have, they liked their hard liquor the same as today. But, that's all it was, was the liquor. As far as getting high on other things, we've never heard of the stuff they have today. We never knew what the word even meant. I can't even remember anybody talking about marijuana. I wouldn't have... I never heard the word. And the other things they used today, no we've never even heard of it, we didn't have no idea. With us it was uh, yeah once in a while... it was new year's you know, we'd get my dad's wine. Maybe drink a little bit too much just to get a little happy, but that was about it.

Mrs. Ciocca: You football team got drunk in the cellar of your house.

Ciocca: Well my brother did, one time. He brought the whole Van Nuys High School football team over, and we've got a big cellar underneath this house -- where we kept all our wines, it was a big all concrete cellar-- and he brought the football team. He was on the football team so he brought them all over one afternoon, when my dad was gone naturally. And he took them to the cellar and passed out the free wine, and they all got pretty gay.

Dodson: Was that at the time that you were living over there where the college is now?

Ciocca: Yeah that's right. This was about oh in 1939.

Dodson: I see... ha ha ha...

McNeil: Was there ever any serious damage caused by kids getting drunk? Or was drunk driving a serious problem at the time? Or anything like that?

Ciocca: No, not really. I can never remember anybody being... no, the kids were pretty wild and they were... you know, but I can't ever remember anybody being arrested for drunk driving. No, they seemed like the... well of course, drunk driving... there really wasn't too much to hit in those days! Maybe that was the reason they weren't arrested...ha ha ha...

McNeil: What about the Fourth of July? Did you have any big celebrations or anything?

Ciocca: Well that was one of the big things of the year, was

the Fourth of July. We had all these... people that worked for us and they were just, it seemed like I looked back at it today, and it seemed like they were just big overgrown kids, you know. They must have been in their early 30's or late 30's, but they must've been just overgrown... come Fourth of July, and they would go to...go to Burbank. It's where you used to be able to get your firecrackers and all those fireworks. And they'd spend a whole month's paycheck on fireworks, just so they could blast everything up there in one evening. And we used to have people come around, oh blocks around, just in front of our house there just because they see... these boys would put on a show for them, and they used to be part of the display for that day.

Dodson: Did you have any sort of patriotic observances in connection with the day? Patriotic speeches, and band concerts, and parades and that sort of thing?

Ciocca: No, they had a... as I remember it, Van Nuys used to have parades on the Fourth and on Veterans' Day. Most of the displays were in downtown. I think they still have it down in L.A. cause we were still pretty far out here. We had our own little parade but they were pretty small.

Dodson: Since we were talking about such things such as the possibility of drunken driving which you said didn't occur, what about some of the other things that bother us nowadays? Such as vandalism. Did you get any of that, do you recall?

Ciocca: Only on Halloween nights. Ha ha ha... and we had a little bit. But outside of that, never!

Mrs. Ciocca: It wasn't malicious any.

Ciocca: I mean you never locked, I don't think we've ever locked the door in our house as long as I've lived there. But no, there was very little, just the kids would have a ball on Halloween night. But outside of that, no. I can't remember anything that amounted to very, anything at all.

Dodson: And that leads us to the question of crime in general. Do you feel that there's more crime now, than when you were in your teens, say?

Ciocca: Oh yes, of course we've got more to contend with now. There must be a percentage wise, I don't know. And it was very few, you know the valley was very sparsely populated then. Like uh, I can't remember anything serious. If there was a hold up... if a gas station was held up in those days, it was put on the front page of the paper. Of course today, they very seldom even put it on the back page.

Dodson: When you were in high school, did you have any particular vocational aims that you were wanting to do, wanting to realize? What were your plans for the future?

Ciocca: My plans for the future was, I was going to stay on the farm and raised cows. That's what I wanted to do all my life! Not dairy cows, I would never go into raising dairy cattle because I saw what it did. And I saw what you have to do. I saw my dad work 365 days a year for 30 to 40 years, and I talked to myself, "No way!" Christmas, New Year's, Fourth of July, it didn't make any difference. You work every

day, and I said, "That would never do!" I'd like to went into raising beef cattle. Of course the value of the property went to the point where our... this place, my father originally paid $20,000 for it--including the barn, the house and everything. And, and, going... of course, from 1920 to that time the value of the property got to the point where I really couldn't afford to... before I just dreamt about it.

Mrs. Ciocca: ... gone back about the train. You should've told them about the goat team. There was only one squad car in the whole valley. They covered the entire valley and they were called the goat team. And you know Dotty's [sp ?] husband was part of it. Nanny, Bill Nanny was it? And Ralph Kidd, and Bill Nanny [sp ?] and they called them the goat team. Wasn't that it, honey?

Ciocca: Yeah... there were only two squad cars in the valley. One patrolled north of Vanowen, and the other south of Vanowen. And this particular one where they called the goat team because... uh, because the name of the police... one was Ralph Kidd and the other one was Forrest Nanny [sp ?], with Kidd and Nanny, they called them the goat team.

Dodson: Ha ha ha... well that's a rather humorous aside to get on our tape. You feel that the valley is somewhat less safe now, than it was in the past? Would you feel safe taking a walk at night, for instance?

Ciocca: Oh, I think most parts of it... I think in most parts of the valley it's... it's still that way. But it's just becoming... it's not a valley to me, it's a big city now. And I think any big city would have your

problems which you don't have in a small area.

Dodson: Do you think that there's any minority tension now, as compared with the early days? Or is that uh, were there any sort of questions about minorities? In the... when you were in your twenties, in your teens?

Ciocca: No, there was no minority problem at all in those days. You might say everybody was a minority. Because you had every kind of nationality here. And everybody that lived in the valley, there was only one thing they could do and that was work. As long as you got everybody working, I don't think you're going to have problems. And that was the main... the main reason they didn't have... they never... you just didn't look at a person as a minority, you look at another person as to what kind of a job he does. And what can he do the best? And we had no problem whatsoever with minorities.

Dodson: That's been the impression I got from interviews with other people too. That that was really not an issue at any time in the past in the valley.

McNeil: Getting off that, could you tell us anything more about this photograph that we have? Tell us who the people in the pictures are? And where are you? Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Well, my dad and my mother. And the two men you see there are milkers that we had, that milked the cows. And the one smallest boy was our neighbor boy, he lived just north of us. And the other boy is my brother. My brother was approximately 11 or 12 years

old or thirteen there, I can't remember. We had two other people that worked but they were in the field at the time. And for some reason, they couldn't get me to pose. And I don't know what this means, you know how some people didn't like to pose, well that was me. I was hiding out there in the north end, you see a little pipe stand or irrigation stand, and I was hiding behind that stand there watching all this action going on.

Dodson: It's a little hard to explain why people don't pose. Now, we have a picture of our faculty in 1950, and there was only one person missing out of the whole group... guess who? Ha ha ha... so I'm a little like you. I wish I had been there later, but I didn't think about it at the time.

McNeil: Do you... could you tell us something about what the young neighbor boy is doing today? Do you know? Or who he is?

Dodson: That's the smallest boy in the picture, is that the one you mean Cathy?

McNeil: Yes.

Ciocca: Yeah, that's... well the last I heard he was the boys' vice principal at Santa Monica High School. I haven't seen this, this fella for years!

McNeil: What was his name?

Ciocca: His name is William Delkener. If anybody happened to be down in Santa Monica at any time, and if you go on to the high school, see if there's a William

Delkener there. And if he is, tell him you've got a picture of him.

McNeil: Wasn't one of the field hands there? Wasn't there a relation of his that you sold your ranch to? Or how did that happen?

Ciocca: Yes, that's one fellow there next to the end there, his name was Paul ...?... Well this farmer of ours eventually went to his-.. one of his relatives hands now I don't know which relative it is or what. But he had the same name as this man. Our place eventually went to this man during the late 30's, around 37, '36 some area like that.

McNeil: How was Mr. Whitsett connected with the land in the valley? Could you tell us something about what he did?

Ciocca: Well Mr. Whitsett was... he owned quite a bit of land. I imagined people who studied the history of the valley remembers how Mr. Whitsett used to promote the sale of land in the valley -- trying to get people to buy land in the valley. He would bring them at here in horse and buggy to Van Nuys and showed them different areas that were for sale. Well he owned quite a bit of land across the street from us on the west side of Fulton there, it ran all the way from Oxnard almost down to Burbank. When I... I'll never forget my dad always had the greatest respect for Mr. Whitsett. It was Mr. Whitsett who put him in business. And if it hadn't been for Mr. Whitsett, he probably would never have went into the cattle business, into that dairy business. Mr. Whitsett financed his purchase of all the cattle. And at that

time my dad went, took over the ranch, had just enough money to put downpayment on the farm. And he needed the cattle. There was no use to have the dairy unless you've got the cows to go with it. So he went into Mr. Whitsett at the time and asked him if he could borrow money to buy the cattle. And Mr. Whitsett, wanting to build up the valley, and needing people here, says, "Well, I know you kind of people are hard workers," he says, "You just figure out how much you need and it's yours." So my dad never forgot him for that.

McNeil: Did he actually owned the land? Or was he selling it for someone else? Because I've heard that he was just a real estate agent and that Mr. Van Nuys was the one who actually owned the land. Do you know about that?

Ciocca: Yes, he uh, that's true. He owned quite a bit, but he was mostly in real estate, yes. And he acquired land on his own. And as the years go by, I guess he knew what the good buys were. But mainly he was dealing with the sales of the property, trying to get Van Nuys founded.

McNeil: Can you tell us something about the rid... uhm, some of the early families, like the Van Nuys or Lankershim families? Were you familiar with them or their ranches at all?

Ciocca: No, I'm afraid that goes just a little bit 'fore me. That goes back quite a ways. Oh, I used to hear stories about the Van Owens and how they divided the property in the valley. Sherman took one section, and Van Owen took the other, and they split it down

the middle. And they used a... as I heard it, they used a harrow for a line. They got a horse, and they hooked it to a harrow, and they started driving down Van Owen... where Van Owen Street would be today I guess you would say. They went across the valley and said, "Well, you own the south part and I own the north part." And that was the way they divided it up.

McNeil: What about the Weddingtons? Do you know anything about that family?

Ciocca: No, I really don't. That was strictly over there in North North Hollywood, Lankershim. I never did really know anything about them.

Dodson: We were talking about the Long Beach earthquake. Do you remember any of the other earthquakes since then and how they affected you?

Ciocca: Well yes, the ...?... earthquake was in 19... during the early 50's, '52. I remember that, that was quite a little jolt we had at night. And it shook me up pretty good. You see I was asleep at about three or four o'clock in the morning. It was quite a severe jolt....

[tape 1 side 2 ends]

Dodson: We were talking about earthquakes when the other tape ran out. Do you remember the Sylmar quake?

Ciocca: Didn't even feel it!

Dodson: You didn't feel it?

Ciocca: No, at the time I just felt disappointed that I didn't get to feel it. I mean I was hurt, I've never forgotten it. At the time I was in a truck and I was in the corner of Sherman Way and Whitsett. Driving along, I see all these lights flashing. All the lights going on, and I thought, why these guys, the D M... what do you call it, the water and power, turned the lights off and it's still dark! And I can see the flashing, then I knew. As soon as I see the lights flashing I knew there was an earthquake. But actually, to feel it, I didn't feel a thing!

Dodson: You're the first person that we've come across who was present in the valley, who didn't feel that quake!

Mrs. Ciocca: He's always felt cheated about that.

Dodson: Well you know, most of us would be perfectly willing to be you and not feeling that one.

Mrs. Ciocca: Not really! When everybody else was talking about it, and you don't want to be the one....

Ciocca: Yeah, you know, I've heard people tell, "I was here" and this was doing that and this was doing that. My wife tells me how the water come splashing out of the pool clear up the sides of the house...

McNeil: Really?

Ciocca: And I said, "Oh really?" And I got to listen to all this and I didn't feel a thing!

Dodson: Well you've made history as the first person we've

interviewed who was here that didn't feel that quake! Ha ha ha... So that's interesting in itself. But it proves that if you're in a car then, you don't get the same effects as you would under other conditions.

Ciocca: No, evidently. Because I had no sensation of movement at all. Of course it was dark, maybe if it had been daylight it might have been different. But that dark, in the dark you have no sensation of movement whatsoever.

Mrs. Ciocca: But you've point out that you were in a large tractor, too. It wasn't just a car, he was in a large tractor. How much did it weigh, honey?

Ciocca: Well that truck was large, yes. It was a combination of truck and trailer. Naturally it wouldn't move as much but still, as big a jolt as that must've been ... not feeling it, it seems odd!

Dodson: Then we won't ask you whether you've heard anything, because of the motor going of your truck, you wouldn't have heard any sound. People argue about whether an earthquake does or does not make a sound. I think on one of them you said, you've definitely heard a sound, did you not?

Ciocca: Oh yes, in that Long Beach quake. That's the first thing I was aware of, was the rumble. It was quite a rumble under foot. And then the shaking started. Like I said, the shaking started right after the rumble. Then came the rolling motion of the, of the swell. It was like riding over an ocean swell. And uh, I remember that very well.

McNeil: What... getting off earthquakes, what was family life like way back when? Did people have large families? Or medium size families? Or what was it like for the families in San Fernando Valley?

Ciocca: Actually, the families are what you would call a medium to small, I can't remember any large families. Mostly there's two or three kids in each family, the way I remember it. And everybody seemed to have a kid. I don't know , there was always kids around. We've always had kids to play with, but there wasn't any large groups in any one area.

McNeil: What about religious life? Was there any particular type of churches in the valley? Or were people of different denominations and did you have to travel very far to get to church?

Ciocca: Yes, there were... there was you might say, every denominations of church. But traveling was far, it was always in town. The churches were always located right in town. There was nothing, no outlying areas. And people would go to church, I don't think... in fact there were some that probably went to church more then than they do today. Not so much the younger people, the younger people was strictly in Sunday School. Seemed like most of the younger people went to Sunday School. I never went to church or Sunday School because to me there was always a lot of work around the ranch. And all my neighbors, that fella, that younger boy in the picture, he goes to Sunday School. He used to try and get me to go to Sunday School but I always wanted to work around the farm. I don't know, I like working around the farm. But there was a lot of church activity, but like I said,

in our area, in our particular area, it was always Van Nuys. There were no small churches, there was always large churches and they were right in town.

McNeil: Do you remember when they used to have... this would be 1914, uhm is that before your time?

Ciocca: Yes.

McNeil: Oh, I'm sorry. They had... to start Van Nuys Baptist Church, they had a box car come in with a minister who lived in the church. Have you heard of that? Or do you know anyone saying anything about that?

Dodson: Chapel car, I think. Not a box car.

McNeil: Right! A chapel car, right!

Ciocca: No, I don't... I never... I never did hear about that, no.

Dodson: Since we're on religion, this takes us to another thing. Do you think there's much change in morality, from the time you were a teenager until now?

Ciocca: Oh, there's been quite a change!

Dodson: Ha ha ha... How would you... How would you characterize the change?

Ciocca: Well... you know, they do things today and say things today that we whisper. Maybe! And uh, it's more... but who's to say it's bad or good. They're more outspoken today and people aren't hiding things as much as I think they would in those days. And uh, maybe

it's the way it should be, I don't know.

Dodson: Now I was reading in the paper just a day or two ago, that the census bureau said that there are over one million Americans living together who are not married. Did that happen much when you were in your early 20's?

Ciocca: No, I can't ever remember it ever happening. No, nobody... well not not not out here. Because of course we're out in the country, they probably didn't know any better anyway.

Dodson: Ha ha ha... I don't know just how to take that remark! Ha ha ha...

McNeil: Were there any big scandals created by people... uhm, messing around or anything like that? That you can remember?

Ciocca: No, not so... not... I can't remember any. You know the poor old farmers out here, there really weren't too much happening at that time. I mean, you never have much time to fool around. You... most of it was working, sleep!

Mrs. Ciocca: ...What about that Mrs. Case [sp.?] Wasn't it Mrs. Case [sp ?] that used to come around with long dresses and try to get acquainted with your dad?

Ciocca: Oh that's it!

Mrs. Ciocca: After your mother died?

Ciocca: That's the old lady that used to come around here.

She was one of these... well, she was a fanatic. She liked cows. For some reason, she wanted to raise... she liked to fool around with cows. So after my dad sold the cattle and he was leasing this place from the city, she wanted to rent some corrals and put some cattle in there. So my dad said, "Sure go ahead!" So she had two, three, then four, pretty soon she had about fifteen cows out there. And she was just crazy about these cows. And she used to wear these long gowns, these old long gowns. And she used to get out there in the corral and walked around there with the cows, looking them all over, dragging her long gown thru all the fertilizer. And when she got out of there, nobody could stand near her.

Dodson: Well that takes us to the question of fashions. Do you think that they were better or worse than the ones we have now? Of course I don't know if that's a good expression to use, but which one do you prefer?

Ciocca: Oh I think the fashions that they have today are much, much nicer than they had in those days. It was uh... they were... they were pretty much left to the imagination in those days.

McNeil: In town or in the city, what was the like, typical type of dress that a teenage girl would wear? Or a teenage guy? This is not...?... ha ha ha...

Ciocca: The guy, the guy would naturally wear everything baggy, you know, which is a complete opposite of today. You had baggy pants, everything was loose, everything was loose and long. And the girls, uh,

they wore those full skirts, as I can remember. And dresses about half-calfs...

Mrs. Ciocca: ...before those white cords. The guys would wear those white cords and they would never wash them!

Ciocca: Well that was a fad that the kids had. You know, the fads that kids had.

McNeil: About when was that?

Ciocca: This was during the '30s. We wore cords, cord pants. And uh...

McNeil: Corduroy pants?

Ciocca: Corduroy pants. And you had to get the white ones and leave them on for as long as you can! Until they could almost stand up on their own. And it was like a fad, like kids having faded jeans today. In those days it was dirty cords.

McNeil: What about shoes? Were tennis shoes a fad or anything like that?

Ciocca: No, it wasn't... no, tennis shoes weren't a fad. It seemed to me that the fad in those days were the Cuban [?] heels and the pointed shoes.

Dodson: Do you remember any other fads of the period that you think we should know about?

Ciocca: Well, I uh, we had a... I had a hair style that was altogether different. I mean, there was no such thing as people with long hair. I mean, everything was pretty short and then when the war started it

got even shorter than that. Everything was "butched" and everybody had short hair. And there was very little maintenance involved in the old days, of your hair. I mean, you combed it with a towel and let it go at that.

McNeil: What about the women?

Ciocca: No, the girls never wore long hair. Their hair was, as I remember it, shoulder length was just about as long as it got.

McNeil: This is the '20s and '30s?

Ciocca: '20s and '30s, yeah.

McNeil: You hear about the roaring '20s and the flappers and all that, were you conscious of any of that at the time?

Ciocca: No, that was a little bit before my time. I heard about that too. I can't really remember them, I wasn't quite old enough... ha ha ha...

Dodson: I noticed that there's something of a secession movement here in the valley, to take it out of the city of Los Angeles and make it an independent city. How do you feel about that?

Ciocca: Oh, I think it's a good idea. I think it's a... I think the valley pays more than its share and I think it very well can support itself. Of course I don't know how the rest of Los Angeles is going to like it, but I'm sure it would be much... the valley would be much better off.

Dodson: How do you feel on the bussing problem? That's another current valley problem that's getting quite a bit of attention in the papers.

Ciocca: I really don't think it serves its purpose. I really don't think you could... you know, move kids away from their own area and uh, and then leave them... and then bring them back to an area where they know noone. I really don't think it serves its purpose. I would be against it.

Dodson: You did have children yourself, did you not?

Ciocca: Two boys, yes.

Dodson: You don't have to answer this, of course, if you don't want to. But if they were now in elementary school, would you be willing to have them bussed?

Ciocca: No, no I would not. Like I say, I want them... I want them to be raised and play and know their own neighborhood, whoever it may be. I'm not prejudiced against a religion or a race, they could be with anybody. But I just want them to be with the ones that they are living near.

McNeil: Getting off on that, what about the political campaigns in the valley uhm, in the '20s and '30s? What were those like? Who would run for office, and what kind of campaigns would they put on?

Ciocca: Well, I could remember the campaigns of... naturally there was no advertising as far as t.v. goes. So, the only thing they could do was put up posters and they stuck them all over! Telephone poles, out in

the field, trees, everybody had their name on a poster. And that was probably the same as advertising. And it seemed like if once a person gets to be known, I'll never forget Mr. Edward Berkhalder [sp ?] he must've ran for Congress or whatever it was, for thirty years. And he was always there, and he was in there for at least that long.

McNeil: What about things like billboards, outside advertising? What were they like? And uhm, were they was that very much in the valley?

Ciocca: No. No, we had very little of that. That was strictly limited to Ventura Boulevard, which was the main east tch... west street, and on the main thoroughfare Lankershim maybe... Boulevard, Van Nuys and Ventura. But other... other than that, it was hardly noticeable to anyone.

Dodson: What do you regard is the most important event in the history of the valley? Since you have been around?

Ciocca: I think the Owens... the water that they brought from Owen Valley. If it hadn't been for that water, the valley would never have flourished the way it has.

Dodson: That's the same answer, I think, I've had from everyone. Everyone that we've interviewed feels that the coming in of the water was the most important single thing in the history of the valley. It is interesting, though, that after the water came in you wouldn't have been allowed to pump

water yourself, even though you had a well. Is that correct?

Ciocca: Uh, that's correct! The city of Los Angeles owned all the underground water. And if you need, if you wanted water you had to buy it from the city.

Dodson: Is there anything in the history of the valley that you feel was especially unfortunate? That you wished hadn't occured?

Ciocca: Well, naturally I don't like to see the big tracks that went up, polluting the sky. We don't have the sky we used to have, we don't have the stars we used to have. And naturally I would like to see it a little less... a little less polluted, populated.

Mrs. Ciocca: ...Progress hurt the...?...

Ciocca: Oh naturally, naturally.

McNeil: Yeah.

Dodson: Can you tell us about any of the historical sites of importance in the valley? That we may not have heard of? Historical objects?

Ciocca: I really can't, I can't remember anything that goes back years... no, I really can't remember any.

Dodson: Do you know of any long-term residents of the valley, that you think should be interviewed?

Ciocca: Yes, I I... there's one man especially, that I... Mr. Bundy. He's probably been in the valley longer

than anybody I know. My grandmother... of course my relatives goes back in the 1880's. My grandmother was here in the valley in the 1900's. She just passed away a few years ago, too bad she isn't still around. She came here in the early 1900's.

Dodson: Cathy do you have any other questions?

McNeil: Yeah, I was just wondering if there's anything in the photograph that we could go over that we haven't talked about yet. Like uhm, the building of any new buildings, or you said something about the tool shed? Was there anything special about that that you want to tell us?

Ciocca: Well, there are a few things in the... in the... on that picture. The tool shed, we basically built a big tool shed and it was about 50 to 60 feet long and approximately 30 to 40 feet wide. And it was located just uh, oh on the north side of the silo there. We used that to keep all of our tractors and hay-bailers, wagons, and implements and discs that we used. And we use that... speaking of that, I'll never forget we... you know, the wind used to blow here in the valley. I don't know is people, some people haven't been here in the valley very long, they know the Santa Ana winds . But they don't know the Santa Ana wind like the Santa Ana winds used to blow. And I mean the Santa Ana winds that used to blow, it used to blow tumbleweeds as high as that barn, they would stack up on the north side of that barn clear up to the top. I mean, tumbleweeds that would be probably ten to twelve feet high. And the dust from that, we'd lived on visibility down to maybe 200 feet that's as far as

you can see. And that wind would blow sometimes three to four days, it never stopped. So the wind was really fierce. I had an aunt that wouldn't come out here to stay with her sister, which was my mother, because she said, "No way would I stay out there with that wind blowing!"

McNeil: Would people tend to put up large windbreaks, is that why they tend to have large eucalyptus trees out here?

Ciocca: Yeah, there's still some... some wind... eucalyptus trees. A few you see scattered around are probably parts of windbreaks that they used to use. But they used to plant those windbreaks in long lines, many blocks long. But mainly they would protect citrus. Because the valley used to be quite a, north valley especially, was all citrus. Everything was all citrus in the north valley. And they used those long windbreaks to protect the citrus from the wind. Because the wind would damage the fruit just from scratching and whatnot, and that was the main idea of windbreaks.

McNeil: What about smelting pots? Do you have any memories of those?

Mrs. Ciocca: They weren't called smelting pots.

McNeil: Oh, what were they?

Mrs. Ciocca: Smudge pots.

McNeil: Smudge pots, yeah.

Ciocca: Smudge pots! Smudge, yeah... ha ha ha... If anybody's lived through a smudge, you talk about smog well you've never seen smog until they smudge! In the old days, during the middle '30s especially, winters used to be a lot colder than they are today. Ice used to form ... many times I used to have to go out there, and before I go to school in the morning, and get a two by four or whatever... and break the ice on the troughs so the cows could drink water. Sometimes the ice would be an inch to an inch and a quarter thick! Well we don't have those kinds of a winter anymore. Those days, the temperature would get down to the high teens and low twenties. And the oranges, especially with lemons, they had to smudge them. They built these smudge pots, they used oil to burn to try and save them. Well here, on time in the '30s, it got so bad that they start those pots as soon as the sun went down. The temperature would be freezing when the sun went down. So they started these smudge pots and burn them all night long to try and save these trees. And sometimes they couldn't even do that. The trees would freeze, and they'd cut the trees down and started burning them. And they even got to the point where they started burning old tires, piles of old tires. Anything that would burn they would burn, trying to save these orchards. And if you think you've seen or ... you've seen smog, you ought to see the way it was in the morning when the sun came up! The whole valley was nothing but black. If you had a white kid, he wasn't white anymore he was black!

McNeil: Oh no!

Dodson: Well did the smoke itself act as a protector for

the fruit? Or was it the heat and the smoke was just a by-product, or was it important?

Ciocca: No it wasn't the smoke, it was strictly the heat. The smoke was just a by-product. They were trying to... the heat was actually what protected, trying to protect the trees.

Dodson: So actually, if they'd burn something that would've created less smoke, it would've been just as efficient?

Ciocca: It would've been just as sufficient. Just the same as today they used those wind machines, they don't use those oil pots anymore. Now they use strictly wind machines.

McNeil: Can you tell us about some of the movies that were made in and around your ranch?

Dodson: Yes, I think you were telling us about the tunnel?

Ciocca: Oh they were quite a... they used to shoot quite a few scenes for different movies because it was quite a unique place at that time. You know, it was strictly a farm with ....?.... And they used to shoot quite a few small scenes out there. I've never forget the time they... I couldn't have been more than ten or twelve and they shot a scene with Mickey Rooney one morning. They were there and had all their equipment, and I was watching them. And Mickey Rooney come up... I was maybe about nine, ten, eight? somewhere around there. And he came up to me and said, "Hey kid," he says, "how come you're not in school?" He called me a kid and I

don't think he was two years older than I am! Ha ha ha... And I said, "I'm just waiting for the bus." And they were there about two days and they made a... I remember they made the same scene over and over and over. Then we had another time when they made a movie on that lettuce packing ship I was talking about, that spur line. They built a tunnel over it, with a big canvas... it was all made of canvas. And it was supposed to be a tunnel. And it was made out... the stars were Bing Crosby and Bob Burns, and they were bringing some big old steer out from Texas. Some prized steer they were supposed to be bringing out here, and he was supposed to get loose inside this tunnel. And when he ran out, that was supposed to be the end of the scene, they were supposed to catch him there. The only thing is, when he ran out of that tunnel, they didn't catch him! He took off to our place there, and he saw those cows and he run, and he had about forty guys after him. Ha ha ha... It took them about an hour and a half before they caught him. But then they had, oh quite a few different ones... small scenes. They had a big movie there at one time at that ....?.... which was considered big. Because half of Van Nuys must've been down there when they, when they made it. It was made there at the same lettuce shed and quite an elaborate thing! It was supposed to be in Vienna, over in Austria. It was in Vienna over a railroad station. And it was a night when the wind was blowing, and the rain. And they had wind machines, and they had pipes for rain. And they built this whole thing, it took them three to four days to build it. And when they made that scene that night, you couldn't believe the wind! And our house was quite a ways from that, but those trees, they just felt like

they were going to blow down. And we had half of Van Nuys was out there that night. They were parked all over my dad's corn field and he was trying to get them out of there. And every time he'd get one out, someone else would pull in and park on his corn. And finally he gave up. He said, "Ah forget it! What am I going to do? I'll plant it all over again!" But, then there were a few television stories were made there, programs were made there.

McNeil: You mentioned... before you mentioned the name of a movie that was filmed, I think by the corner of... by the walnut groves? Up by Fulton and Oxnard?

Ciocca: Oh! Well if anybody ever sees that old movie, I filmed it on t.v. and I just watch it to see this one scene. It's Cary Grant and uhm, it was Cary Grant with Joan Crawford? I can't remember this. Cary Grant and... Rosalyn Russell, that's who it was. Cary Grant and Rosalyn Russell in "Take a Letter, Darling", and if you ever see that movie, right at the very end... it will show him pulling a horse trailer with her car. And he get on the railroad track and are arguing about something, and he stopped right on the railroad track. And you see this train coming, well that was taken right onthe corner of Woodman and Oxnard. I was there when they made it and I'll never forget it.

McNeil: Is there a story that you could tell us about a certain knife? I don't know, do you remember a story?

Mrs. Ciocca: He knows it! Ha ha ha...

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Mrs. Ciocca: Ha ha ha... Your face is red, honey.

Ciocca: No, I don't know...

Dodson: I think Mrs. Ciocca has suggesting a story for Mr. Ciocca to tell, here.

Mrs. Ciocca: The knife that you took a fancy to!

Ciocca: Oh, a knife ooh! I'll never forget... You know, I must admit, I'm not pure white or anything. But you know, I stole something in my life and I'll never forget it. And it was a knife! When they were making a movie. They were making a movie on the track through there and I was walking through the railroad car, just a kid you know, and here was this knife... a little pocket knife, sitting on the table. And I kept looking at that pocket knife, man I'd like to have that pocket knife! So I walked back out again and pretty soon I got to thinking about it again. And I walked back in and gosh, I'd give anything to get that little pocket knife. Not knowing that somebody planted that thing just to see if I'd take it! I took it! Oh boy, I'll never forget that. The guy that I took it from, he came and told my dad what I done. And oh boy! That's the last thing I ever swiped, believe me!

Dodson: Ha ha ha...

Mrs. Ciocca: What about the time they went around with the lanterns during the day? That movie went on television.

Ciocca: Oh, that was a movie they made of that...?... yeah, "The Hiding Place" they called that story. It was

a thirty minute program. And they used the ranch there, as a setting. And it was a movie about a man who committed a crime, he stole and robbed a bank. He was wounded and he was looking for a place to hide. And he hid there, just found this farm, and he hid there. And he told the owner, "You hide me and I'll split the money with you." So the guy says, "O.K. fine." What happened was, the man died of his wounds. So the farmer says, well he died of his wounds and he got all this money. So I'm going to bury him and try to find the money. So he buried the man and he pursued to find the money. With the story, he dug up the whole place with a shovel and a lantern. Never did find the money, came to find out that he buried the money and the man in the same hole. That's why he never found the money.

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Anyways, it was a wonderful story I watched it on t.v.

Mrs. Ciocca: That was when they were running around, during the day, with a lantern! That was all I meant.

Ciocca: Oh, it was shot during the day but it was supposed to be a night scene and that's why you had the lantern.

McNeil: Are there any other stories that you could tell us, like about the apricot orchards, or about the poultry farm that was real close to you?

Ciocca: Oh, outside of that... uh, we used to have a lot of apricot trees. Peaches, and uh... boy, I mean melons

or tomatoes... you'll be surprised how good they are when they're right off the vine!

Dodson: I gather then that life was a little less formal in the valley in those days. If your neighbor had apricots, you were allowed to pick out some, then?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, I mean, you know... the fact of the matter is, you traded. I mean, it wasn't so much... if you had apricots and the other guy had plums, or if you had eggs and somebody had something else, you traded. Nobody uhm... they don't even regard whether it was an even trade or not, just that you traded. Very little money changed hands.

McNeil: You got something for something. Uh, did you have migrant farm workers? Working in the valley during that time?

Ciocca: Well yeah, there were quite a few. Although not so much as probably they have like in Imperial or Coachella Valley or San Joaquin, but there were a few. Just like this man that used to prune our grapes, that's all he did. He just scrabble around and people would have a grape orchard or vineyard, he'd prune their grapes. But it wasn't really too much migratory at that time.

McNeil: Where would those people stay? Or were you familiar with their live styles at all? Besides just that one man?

Ciocca: Well actually, the ones that were moving from job to job, most of them would just sleep right out underneath the stars, haystack or what ever it may

be. Uh, it weren't really particular. I don't know, it was... like I say, it was hard in those days. People would look at it... I don't know if too many people could do it today. It was tough, it was a tough life.

Dodson: When we speak of migrant workers, did that include whole families? Moving around, or just individual man?

Ciocca: Mostly it was just individual, not so much whole families. Like I say, very few that we ever met were more than just a man. There was that one couple that I remember particularly, but there might have been a few others. But mostly it was single men.

McNeil: During the war, my mother told me a story about how she was working at Lockheed and how they had camouflaging all over everything. Could you tell us about anything like that? In the valley?

Ciocca: Well yeah, most year... during the war, most aircrafts were camouflaged. I remember when Lockheed was fixed up to look like a dairy over there, one time. And all the water... your main aquaducts were painted a different color to camouflage. And uh, anything that was of military importance they tried to cover it or camouflage it to some extent. Yes, I remember that.

McNeil: Who was doing most of that work? Camouflaging? Did they have special groups of people just doing that? Or was it the companies itself that were doing it?

Ciocca: I think a lot of it has to do with the military. They seemed to be the ones that knew... that knows what was to do and what was not to do. I think most of it was done by the military.

Dodson: Do you remember rationing in the valley? Was that severe enough to cause you any trouble?

Ciocca: Boy, I remember rationing! But no, the only trouble it caused me was the shoes. I mean, as far as the cheese, the butter, the meat, no it didn't bother us. And the gas, naturally I had more gas than I can use. Because we had the farm equipment, tractors and trucks, and they gave us all the gas we needed. And as far as the food rationing goes, no. It was no problem. Whatever we were allowed was more than we needed. But the only thing was **the shoes. And** I was a young guy and I wanted more than a pair of shoes. And they only allowed you two pairs a year. And that's the thing that I remember more than anything as far as the rationing goes.

Dodson: I seem to remember the problems relating to different kinds of clothing were probably more severe than the food problems, myself. And your mentioning shoes recalled it to my mind.

McNeil: Do you have any other ...?

[tape 2 side 1 ends]

Dodson: We were talking about the war, and particularly about rationing. Mr. Ciocca, do you remember what sorts of things were in short supplies? As soon as the war began?

Ciocca: Well, yes... I remember rubber. Actually, rubber was one of the firsts because that was cut off by the Japanese right at the beginning. And then fuel, gas... rubber... and then your food stuff. What was it? ...sugar, cheese and sugar, butter and... And then apparel was shoes, the main things... as a shorter supply. And then... but the rubber and the gasoline was the things that I think for people are the hardest part, trying to get by without.

McNeil: Tell us about giving people gas.

Ciocca: Oh, you know, we run a farm. And then the government would naturally look into the farm, because we're helping the war effort, so they allowed you what you needed. Then you had to tell them, approximately, how much you're going to use. Gas especially, gasoline. So I'm, you know, it was up to me at the time and I was just a young guy and I'm trying to figure out how much gas I was going to need. Well naturally I've got myself included in this needy gas, not just the tractor. So I made out a request, oh I don't know what it was, for four thousand gallons or something like that a year. Well I come to find out that I really didn't need the whole four thousand, but they issued us that many stamps to me. So by the time, I really didn't need that much. So then these buddies of mine would be in the service, you know, and they come home on leave. They got a ten days or thirty days, and they don't have enough gas. So they'd all come to me and "Hey man, you're on a farm and you got nothing but gas over there, so come on." So what am I going to do? These guys were, there was a lot of them going overseas and it's their last leave, so I'd say, "Sure boys, you know,

tank it up, fill it up, that's the least I can do."

Dodson: Mrs. Ciocca, I'd wonder if you'd tell us about what sort of shortages in clothes developed, as a result of the war?

Mrs. Ciocca: Well, naturally the nylons. But they were made of rayon then. Nylons really haven't been developed yet, but they used to stand in line to get those. Bubble gum, I remember, you couldn't get! Ha ha ha... And that's really... nylons is about all I can really remember I could think about. We used make-up on our legs instead of the nylons. But as a child, too, we used to go around in a wagon and collect all the rubber balls. And we'd save tin foil, on cigarette packages, if you remember. And gum wrappers, we'd make big tin foil balls and go around collected them for the war effort, in those days.

McNeil: What would you do with them?

Mrs. Ciocca: We'd just have big balls of tin foil. And also fat, from like baking drippings.

McNeil: Oh really?

Mrs. Ciocca: We'd just put them all in a can and there's always somebody to come around and collect all these cans of fat. And...

McNeil: The same as tin foil?

Mrs. Ciocca: No, no, we'd save those in tin cans. But fat, the drippings say from bacon, we would put that in a can and they would come around and collect them. I

forget what they'd be used for. But then in the tin foils, we would take off gum wrappers and cigarrette packages, and make tin foil balls. And then we'd just go around and collect any any metal, and then take it to a collecting place and they would uh, it was all for the war effort.

McNeil: Tell us about the rubber shortage. What did that create as far as people's say, underclothings?

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, ha ha ha... Well men, I don't know. I remember my dad once... ha ha ha... I don't know how many others, but I'm certain he couldn't have been the only one. He took to wearing women's pants. But they didn't have any elastic, they had buttons. They'd have no elastic around the top, they had little buttons. And so you couldn't get them and that was all you could do.

McNeil: That was because they were made of rayon?

Mrs. Ciocca: Well they were all made of rayons, yes. The panties were, yes.

Dodson: Weren't there some with drawstrings?

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah, I'd imagine. I remember only the ones with buttons... ha ha ha... that's all I remember... ha ha ha... But I guess, you know, I'm certain my father wasn't the only one. I don't know why men's underwear was hard to get, I really don't, except for the elastic... but...

Dodson: Well I think it was the elastic that caused the whole trouble.

Mrs. Ciocca: Yes, uh huh. But that's all... that's... that's really all I can remember... ha ha ha... I was having a good time, though. I was too young to remember the hardships. I took it all in my stride.

McNeil: You had a story about a teacher?

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh yes. It was about a hose... Thrifty Drug Store in L.A. was having a sale on these nylon hoses. It's been advertised for a week. So naturally, as a junior high... I stook in line for hours so I could get a pair of nylons. So I could, well I guess "brown nose" you'd call it, a teacher. Take it in to my favorite teacher, that was what I did with the hose. And another thing I used to do, nobody, I'd never heard of anyone ever doing it, was bubble gum. You know, we used to blow bubble gum... my husband's laughing... ha ha ha...

Ciocca: I don't know....

Mrs. Ciocca: We used to take just any kind of gum we can, and you take scotch tape and you put it in boiling water. And then you can peel that sticky stuff off of the tape and chew that with your gum, and you can blow bubbles ha ha ha... just like regular bubble gum! ha ha ha...you really could! It was... you had two or three sticks of gum and the scotch tape mixed with it, and you can blow the best bubbles, you had no problem. Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Now, you see, we think we're so advanced in 1977, and we're learning a new way of chewing bubble gum! Ha ha ha... Your speaking of the bubble gum reminds me of one thing that I sufferred from during the war.

I loved chocolate candy, and chocolate bars just practically disappeared.

Mrs. Ciocca: You'd better believe that. You couldn't get them. The nickel bar, once in a while there used to be a little vendor that would come around. And we'd pay, bubble gum was a penny a piece, but we were prepared to pay a quarter for it, if we could get it. So and we did, many times, I mean real bubble gum. But also the Hershey bar was I think, twenty-five to fifty cents a bar. And we'd pay it, just to get one, oh yeah.

McNeil: That's like a couple of dollars, now.

Mrs. Ciocca: Right!

Ciocca: Yeah, uh huh.

Mrs. Ciocca: But just to get one, you'd pay it. But it was real chocolate. See today, what you're eating in a Hershey bar is not real chocolate, it's not the same thing. At all! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Well this is the first time in our interviews that the question of rationing during the wars come up, so we're glad to get this on tape. Can you think of anything else, in the rationing line, that caused you trouble? As it disappeared?

Ciocca: No, I really can't. As I say, tires, gas are the... boy, to a kid that's twenty years old, what could be any more of a... any more important? Tires and gas and food stuff. There wasn't really... people weren't really that much put out. You look back at it today

and it wasn't really that tough.

Dodson: Was there any type of appliances that you wanted to get, that you couldn't buy during the war period? Or tools? Or anything along that line?

Ciocca: I think most for your appliances. But any case of vit... in our case was, we were considered a vital industry, naturally agriculture, we had no problem at all getting whatever we needed. Milking... we had milking machines at the time, and there was no problem getting parts. We always had a, what they called, A priority so we never did suffer any problems on getting any replacements.

Dodson: It seemed to me that sugar was rationed, is that correct? I don't recall for sure, just what was and what wasn't.

Ciocca: Yes, sugar was rationed. I think you are allowed five pounds per person per month.

Mrs. Ciocca: When you can get it.

Ciocca: Yeah. But it was on a stamp. I kind of remember the stamp, everything had a stamp. And sugar, yeah there was a sugar stamp.

Mrs. Ciocca: ...?... no washing machine, no refrigerator or anything...

McNeil: What about recollections that you have about appliances that weren't available?

Mrs. Ciocca: Well refrigerators you couldn't... we were using an

icebox. I mean you uh, refrigerators, washing machines, anything! There was nothing available. Nothing at all. What you had you kept. You didn't get anything... not until the end of the war. After the war then you started getting them back again.

Dodson: One of my recollections is that the war had hardly begun when all these scarcities began to develop.

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah.

Dodson: It was just amazing how these scarcities developed.

Mrs. Ciocca: But we were unified. I mean, the country was unified. I mean, even though it was a hardship, we all accepted it... as a thing to do. I mean, there was no... noone regretted it or resented to having... we regretted to having to do, but noone resented to doing it.

Dodson: Would you feel, since this has come up, that there's a different feeling in the valley for World War II than there was for Vietnam and North Korea? Those two wars?

Mrs. Ciocca: There's no comparison. None whatsoever! I mean, well, I had my feeling on the Vietnam. I don't know what rooted... what started it or anything, I didn't get really... all I remember is basically is when they started so many protests. That's when, really, I think, the average person began to really be aware of the Vietnam War and what it was all about. But I would think really, any of us, I don't anyway, really know what it was all about. And my only feeling is I wished we 'd gone in there, clean the mess and got out! Like we should have done, that's

my feeling on it!

McNeil: Getting off the war, ha ha ha... well, cooling it down. I was wondering about itce. You keep talking about ice and ice and ice. I know when you're a child, there was no refrigeration so they used ice to pack lettuce. And then you mentioned during the war you had to use iceboxes. Uhm, where did the ice come from? How was it stored or made?

Ciocca: Well it was a big... I think what they called the Union Ice Company, and I think it's still around. But there was a big one in Van Nuys, on Tyrone and Vesper, I think it was. And they used to haul truckloads and truck loads of that ice down to this lettuce packing plant. An ice block... a block is actually about four feet high... I'd say four feet high and three feet wide and probably ten inches to twelve inches thick, that was one block! And they would bring this ice out here by the truck... like I say, by the truck loads. And then they'd grind it up, they had a big grinder that uh, they would ground up the ice. But most of the ice in Van Nuys, came from the Union Ice Company.

McNeil: What about for ice boxes? I guess when you were a child there was no real refrigeration, so you always had to use an icebox.

Ciocca: Hhmm.

McNeil: How woule the people get the ice for their icebox? Would it be like the milkman? Would they have an iceman to come along? Once a week or something?

Ciocca: Yeah, yeah, that's what they used to call 'em, the iceman. And he would come along with these big blocks of ice. And he'd say, well what do you wat, twenty-five or fifty pounds, whatever you want. And he would chip it out with an icepick. A piece of approximately that size. And then every kid would be sitting there, waiting for little chunks to fall off the truck, so you'd grab it and stick it in your mouth. And that was our big treat.

McNeil: Where would you store the ice, once you had it? Would you store it, like, in your cellar? Or where would it go?

Ciocca: No, it went right into the... it went right into the icebox.

McNeil: Well I mean, you were talking about twenty-five pounds, that seems like a huge chunk! Would you have an icebox that large?

Ciocca: Well, twenty-five pounds was approximately fifteen inch square, that was approximately twenty-five pounds.

Dodson: What people would actually buy, Cathy, is the amount that would go into their icebox.

McNeil: Oh, I see.

Dodson: They would buy the chunk that would fit their ice-box.

Ciocca: Yeah.

McNeil: Do you have anything to say about that?

Mrs. Ciocca: No, I don't... ha ha ha... I'm just a little...?... I'm so sorry... ha ha ha... Where would you store that... ha ha ha... I couldn't help it, it was kind of cute. You know, ice. She doesn't know that, but I don't know that, honey... ha ha ha...

Ciocca: ...?... do you? Ha ha ha...

Mrs. Ciocca: I know, but it just sounded so funny... ha ha ha... Because actually, the milk man... your back door was open and the ice man would just walk in. And you would see what you needed and he'd put it in and leave a bill. And that's... he wouldn't really ask, he'd just walk in and see how much you needed, throw it in and walk out.

McNeil: Well I guess it was safe. What about with the milk man and the grocery man, I don't think you had grocery man or anything. But for the people in the town, would there be a regular milk man who would go around and leave milk on the doorstep? And then groceries, have the grocery man come by, is that the way it usually works?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, they had the milk man like they have... in fact, they had more than they had today. Of course, we used to sell quite a bit at the place... which was whole sale, and a lot of people would come by and buy the milk by the gallon. And we'd sell it raw, it wasn't pasteurized or homogenized or anything. It was raw milk and we'd sell it by the gallon. They would brought a container and we'd sell it to them, at the ranch. It was much cheaper than having it

brought by the milk man. If I could remember now, if you want to talk about price, I could remember the milk was sold for 6¢ a quart, or 24¢ per gallon.

McNeil: What about telephones? When did those come in, did you have one in your ranch?

Ciocca: Yeah, we had a telephone during the 20s. I remember when it was upright, it was a stand-upright telephone, you took the receiver off and stuck it to your ear. I could remember that telephone in this room. And the numbers were simple, there wasn't too many people. Our number was, it was 719W, that was our number. It was very simple.

Dodson: It that the time when they had the cranks on them? Or was that the cranks, belong to an earlier period?

Ciocca: No, they didn't have it, that was a little bit earlier. The cranks were a little earlier than these upright phones. They were still using them in some cities, Calabasas for instance, had crank phones out there, I think up to 1940.

McNeil: What about the operators in the town? Do you have any stories to tell us about that? Uhm, like do they know generally what the community was doing? Or where so and so was at such and such a time? And things like that?

Ciocca: Well, I'd imagine they'd listened in a lot, ha ha ha... but there were still more people than that, you know. It wasn't like a one-horse town, I mean, but I imagine these operators got into some pretty juicy conversations all right.

Dodson: I'd imagine, what you were referring to, Cathy, would have been more typical of a real rural area, and not closely connected to a city.

McNeil: Oh, I guess so.

Dodson: With all these telephones on the same line.

Ciocca: Yeah.

Dodson: But one difference would've been that you had to call you number to central, wasn't it? and she would hook you up. There was no dialing of the type that we have now.

Ciocca: Oh no. No, there was no dialing. You always had to... everything had to go to the operator.

McNeil: Would they had telephone books? The way they have them today?

Ciocca: Uh, yeah. Same thing, the books are the same as today. Of course, not as thick, but they were the same thing we have today.

Dodson: And of course one difference would've been that instead of having them all numbers, they were names, as part of it, was it not? Was that not true?

Ciocca: Yes, that's true. They were, yes. And in fact, like I say, after... our first, I remember, it was just 719W then state, ...?... came in. But before that, there wasn't even that, it was just strictly numbers.

McNeil: Uhm, what do you recollect about the freeways coming in? Uhm, do you remember when they came and what

effect they had on people in the valley? Or, uhm, like that?

Ciocca: Well, naturally, Ventura was our first freeway that we remembered here. And uh, everybody at the time... at the time, thought, you know, that they really, they didn't really need that. What are they building? Tearing out all these houses and taking all these properties? What do we really need that for? You know, a lot of people used Ventura Boulevard rather than use the Ventura Freeway. But as time went on, and more and more people moved here, to settle here, it became pretty obvious why they had to build that freeway. I don't know what in the world they would do today without it. They could never move the traffic like they do.

McNeil: Do you remember what year that came in? About...?

Ciocca: I don't really recall the Ventura freeway, when it was uh... It must've been right after the war, right around the early '50s. Yeah, they took my grandmother's property. My grandmother had a ranch on Riverside Drive, just west of Fulton. I remember they took back her property for that, for the freeway.

Dodson: Did she feel that she was adequately compensated for it? Was there any hard feelings on that?

Ciocca: No, at that time the price was fair. Of course, if you could hung on to it until today, it would've been not fair...ha ha ha...

Dodson: Well Cathy, do you have any more questions?

McNeil: Oh yeah... ha ha ha... Uhm, when you were a teenager,

I was just thinking, today, it's like every kid has to have a car. Well, what was it like for the kids when you were a teenager? In the '30s, was it like every kid had a car? Or did you just mostly used the red car or go on foot?

Ciocca: Every kid had to have a car, haven't changed a bit!

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: That was your ultimate goal, to have a car. I was, my first car, I was seventeen years old, I was in eleventh grade in high school when I got my first car. And you know, it wasn't... it was fun to buy, when I look back at it. But how I earned it, earned the money for it, I paid two hundred... it was a '34 Ford, which today naturally it's an antique. But this was a little '34 Ford, built with a little seat, and it was a classy car. And I earned the money to buy that car by working for my dad in the summer time. I used to irrigate the alfalfa farm, my job was strictly irrigating the alfalfa and feeding the cows at night. I had 120 cows I had to haul hay and I had to feed them at night. And for that I got $1 a day. And I, you worked during the summer. And saved my money, during the summer, for four years until I got $240 to buy this 1934 Ford. And everybody thought, "Boy, if I were rich as you were... your dad..." And they don't know what I went through to get that money to buy that little car. But that was a big thing with me, just like it was with most kids. That's the first thing they'd want is a car, when they got old enough to drive.

Dodson: You mentioned that the car had a rumble seat. I'm not sure whether Cathy knows what a rumble seat was

or not, do you Cathy?

McNeil: Well I have a faint idea of it.

Dodson: Maybe you could tell us what that was, so the future will know what a rumble seat was.

Ciocca: Isn't that funny? Now, it didn't even dawn on me... It was just a little seat in back, just in back of the front seat. Like you have a club coupe today, well we didn't have the club coupe. We had the front seat and then there was nothing. And in back of the window of the car...

Mrs. Ciocca: On the outside.

Ciocca: On the outside, you had this little seat that you... Like in mine, for instance, if you pull a lever, this little seat pops up. The top would pop out and there'd be a seat there and it would hold two people.

Dodson: It was as though the trunk came up, Cathy, the trunk is the nearest I could explain it to you.

McNeil: Well, would you face forward, or face?

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah.

McNeil: Oh, you'd face forward?

Ciocca: Face forward, yeah.

McNeil: Hhmm! Well that's interesting.

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, it was awkward riding back there! Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Well that was the rumble seat... hhmm, I never thought of that... ha ha ha...

Dodson: Cathy's bringing out all sorts of points that we've never put on record before! Well if you had some more questions, Cathy, on things that we didn't realize were so unknown?

McNeil: What about things like technological differences from when you were a kid on the ranch to uhm, when you were a teenager. How much did things change in that time? Like, uhm, different appliances that came in, even your toilet? Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Well, uh...

McNeil: Did any... major changes like that?

Ciocca: Oh yes, you mentioned appliances. Funny you should mention that because they really build them in those days. In fact, I've got the... the refrigerator that we had on the farm, that we bought in 1939. It's still sitting out here in the garage, and it's still working as good as it ever did. It's an old Westinghouse refrigerator and it's still running great! It's never been shut off in that many years! And as far as... your appliances were made to last in those days. Much more so than today, I think. Of course they put more material in it than they do today. They can afford to, because today they cost out of sight! But the things were actually built to last. Your washing machine, you bought a store washing machine, it would actually last you for forty years! And it would never wear out. But, uhm, people just couldn't afford to buy new ones. So I guess they had

to have them so they would never wear out.

Mrs. Ciocca: Well now see today, the average housewife uh, well see, I started changing colors in here from pink, I started to go into yellow and green before I injured myself. So I was going to change everything! You know, they didn't do that then. You bought one and that's it!

McNeil: White!

Mrs. Ciocca: Yes! I mean, but now... I mean this is my third or fourth refrigerator. When I was redecorating into yellow and green, I was just gonna... you know, replace it. So they don't do that. When you buy one, and that's it, well...

Ciocca: White, everything was white. That was the color they made it in. That was the color everybody bought, white. Because it goes with everything.

McNeil: What about the stove? When you started out, were you using a wood stove, a gas stove or electric stove?

Ciocca: Well, when we first moved... that first...first thing I could remember was that wood stove we had. The kind that used to have a big heavy lid. Four or five pot-holes and you had a heavy handle to lift it out... that was the first one we had. Then from there we went to gas...naturally we had a typical four burner gas stove. Now in that farm there, they had to furnace down in the cellar. You wouldn't believe the type to be used in this type of weather, in this type of the country, part of the country. But we had a huge furnace down there, it must've been eight foot high and I would say... six foot across was the size of this furnace.

And they had big ...?... pipes that went to every room in the house. So you know from that that the weather used to get very cold... in the 20's and 30's and teens. ...lots of ....?....built that type of furnace.

Dodson: You had a cellar under your house, then? Which is rather unusual in southern California?

Ciocca: Not at that time. Yeah, we had a cellar, most everybody had a cellar. It seemed that the people that built the village that were out here in those days must've been mostly from the east or places where they had cellars because most every farm out had a cellar. I don't remember of any in the college area there, that did not have a cellar. And they were concrete, mainly cement inside. And ours was particularly quite large, it must've been something like fifty by forty feet and it was almost all cement. And actually we used it as a wine cellar mainly.

McNeil: Was that uhm, first off, the furnace... was it coal, wood, or gas?

Ciocca: It was strictly coal and oil. You could use either. We never fired it up in the... as long as I've lived here and we've never used it! Never, not once was it used because we couldn't see the use of a big thing like that when we only use the heater, and only two at a time.

Dodson: The house was then built there before you moved there?

Ciocca: Yes, the house's built in 1917. And my father moved there in 1920.

Dodson: Hhmm.

Ciocca: It was built just during or before the first World War. And it was quite a... like I said, the furnace was quite a thing. I can't understand what they had in mind or what. But they must've got cold is all I could think.

McNeil: Yeah. My grandmother lives in Los Angeles and she also have a cellar. And they also have a furnace exactly like that, I was very surprised when I saw it. But one thing I was thinking about was, what would other people use their cellars for? You used yours for wine cellar, what would the other people use theirs for?

Ciocca: Canning. Everybody canned in those days, which today I guess, is impractical. But in those days everybody canned fruit and vegetables. When canning season came, everyone in every house are putting peaches, pears, whatever was ripe, in the bottles. They called it canning but it was actually a mason jar. And everybody would can and mainly that's what the cellars were used for.

McNeil: How late would that go? How late...like, were they still doing that in the 40's?

Ciocca: About uh, yes, the war... naturally they did it up to the war. And then after the war, it started to get up to the point where it wasn't very practical. I don't know, I think it was up to the point where you could buy as cheap as you can canned it.

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, I think it was the convenience mainly. Because

during the war, so many women had to go to work.

McNeil: Uh hmm.

Mrs. Ciocca: So they got used to buying their canned goods. And they would just... for convenience, they started buying rather than canning.

McNeil: What about... going way back... did you ever have uhm... go-carts? You know, crates uhm, cars that you made out of orange crates and things like that? And race them? Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: I used to make some beauts. Ha ha ha... Boy, get them to get me some orange crates and a pair of roller skates and I could really make me a go-cart! Yeah, I used to tear a pair of roller skates apart and put two wheels on one end and two wheels on the other and a crate in the front and a couple of handles down there and we could really make a good one. And we get a small guy, we'd stick him inside the crate and then we'd move on down the street! And we used to make some nice ones, and paint them up. It was quite a sport and a hobby. Uh, I'll never forget the wheel, I had a wonderful time doing that.

Mrs. Ciocca: And also your football campaigned money. Your football team and your one football a year. You used to fill the bladder with uh, ...

Ciocca: Oh, well, you make everything last. You didn't throw nothing away. When a football wore out, you'd stuff it with rags and make a football out of it. When a baseball got all the hide thrown off, you'd get your tape and taped it all up and made another

baseball.

McNeil: We were talking about roller skaters. Was roller skating a very big thing? Down there?

Ciocca: Yeah, roller skating was one of the big fun we had... as kids. Because actually it was done out in the street, Oxnard... Fulton. Ethel wasn't so hot, it was pretty rough... ha ha ha... but Fulton and Oxnard... Oxnard had a lot of tar but we still made it. Uh, in the week, cars maybe wouldn't come by every half an hour so we had quite a game out there in the streets. And then there were quite a few skating rings around too. They used to have one in Culver City and they had one in Hollywood. And everybody was quite roller skating conscious. Ice skating didn't mean a thing but roller skating, yeah, everybody was pretty happy on roller skating.

McNeil: What are the things that you'd do as kids, like you mentioned making baseballs, and footballs, and stuff, and you drag and things like that. Well, what else did you do?

Ciocca: Oh, just tree houses, caves, and uh, making... riding horses! Everybody had horses, if you didn't have a horse you knew somebody who had one. And you would go and borrow his horse. And spent most of your time hunting, lots of fishing, trapping fish along the riverbed there, and trapped ...?... Just a real Tom Sawyer type of life. Like I say, we'd go fishing down the river. If our chances are good, we'd go down to the L.A. River and fish. We spent most of our time outside, all our dramas [?] were outside. Uh, nothing inside. And if it rained,

you could describe us as crazy cause we couldn't go outside. But most of our fun was strictly on the outside.

McNeil: Now that was for the guys, what about the girls? Weren't they most home-restricted? Or could they be as free as you guys were?

Ciocca: The girls were pretty grubby gals in those days. I mean, there were a lot of tomboy in 'em. I mean they'd go right along and do the things we do. Uh, they used to like the ground on the back of one neighbor gal... I remember her name, Harriet Delkener. Never forget it... she used to go right along and hunt or trap, she'd go right along with us. We'd go down fishing down the river, she'd want to go along. And they got so that they got to do the things the boys did because they enjoyed more. And once they got past the doll stage.

McNeil: Yeah.

Ciocca: Until they got to be teenagers. Between that era, they got to do the things that the boys liked to do.

Dodson: Were they under more restrictions on when they had to get in at night? Than they are now? When you took a girl out on a date, were there all sorts of rules involved?

Ciocca: Uh, I don't think it's any different. It was decent hour, that was all that was ever said. No time limit, you know. Not half the night or all night, just make it a decent hour. I can't remember

around the time when the limit was put on, no.

McNeil: Uhm, what about... did you... when you were a kid did you ever take like, excursions into the city with a bunch of your friends? Like going into Hollywood, trying to see movie stars or anything like that?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, that was the big thing, you know. Going downtown. Of course with the boys, we'd get the guys together and we'd go down to Hollywood. We'd expect if we had time there, we'd go down there just about every week... every weekend, I mean the deal was to go into Hollywood. And the gals...

[tape 2, side 2 ends]

[tape 3, side 1 begins]

Dodson: I believe you were telling us about going to Hollywood for recreation, when our last tape ended, Mr. Ciocca?

Ciocca: That was our big night to go into Hollywood, when we don't go to the beach... We'd either went to the beach or we'd go to Hollywood. And uh, you know, just to... most of the time it'd be the guys. If we got girls we'd always go down to the beach because there's always more to do down there. You know, you'd often have big fires in the sand, or you'd go to the pier and have a ball. But we always went downtown with a bunch of guys and we'd just go to a store, or we'd go to a drive-in, or we'd go to the bowling alley down there, or the ice skating ring. That was our big time down in Hollywood. And if

you acted more mature, then you'd go in by yourself or with your girlfriend and stayed away from everybody else. But this one... have two or three or five, but in our group we'd always have about six of us boys. We always make one night a week to go down to Hollywood, have fun and have a ball.

McNeil: What would you do when you were down there?

Ciocca: ...like I say...

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Well, Hollywood wasn't bad. Sometimes we'd try and get down to L.A., you know, and we'd get down to the restricted area today. You didn't have them in those days. The trolleys, and you know, the ...?... places. We thought we was really big going down there and doing something. We'd get down from the trolley at the main street. Well, compared to nowadays it's not even a GP rated film, what we used to see down there. But it was quite an experience going down L.A. in the main street, where they had to trolleys.

Dodson: I believe that theater is no longer there, is it?

Ciocca: No, it's gone. I can remember the address, 337 South Main.

[laughter]

Dodson I don't know whether Kathy recognizes the Folley Theater by name or not, do you Kathy?

McNeil: No, I don't.

Dodson: Then maybe you could tell her what kind of theater that was, Mr. Ciocca.

Ciocca: Well today I guess they'd call it a strip tease kind of place. And it was lots of young girls and comedians. And believe it or not, we went down mostly to see the comedians rather than the young ladies. Because the comedians used to really send the guys rolling down the aisles, right? That's the part I remember more than anything else, going down there to watch Billy Burst [sp ?] and some of those... Billy Reed [sp ?] I'll never forget him. Some of those comedians! And it was a lot of fun. Very innocent but a lot of fun.

McNeil: Uhm, what about things like... oh, was that vaudeville? Oh, tell us something about vaudeville theaters , if you have some memories of that.

Ciocca: Well, that's strictly all it was, vaudeville. That was the whole thing. Everything was live on stage, there was no uh, no film... and there was a lot of vaudeville acts in the old days. Hollywood had the Blackouts, you might have heard of, Ken Murray [sp ?] and his Blackouts. I remembered they played for a long time in Hollywood. And uh, there were quite a few vaudeville acts they had that we always went to. We enjoyed them as much as we did film.

Dodson: There was nothing like that in the valley? You always had to go elsewhere for that type of entertainment?

Ciocca: Yeah, there was nothing in the valley. In the valley you had uh, maybe between Van Nuys and North Hollywood, between both towns, you had four theaters... four at the very most.

McNeil: Are those movie theaters?

Ciocca: The El Portel, the Guild [sp ?], the Van Nuys Theater and the Rivoli, that's it. That was it, there was no other...

McNeil: Did they just show movies? Or did they have vaudevilled acts or...? What did they show?

Ciocca: It was stricly just motion pictures. There was no vaudeville at all. It was just the old even ...?... that I can remember. But it was just mostly motion pictures, there was no vaudeville. Very... very few shows but they never lacked for business. Saturday afternoon was the big thing for the kids. With your mattinees and your serials, they used to have a running serial every Saturdays... which was a story that carry on from Saturday to Saturday. You couldn't wait to go back and see how the phantom done, if he made it or not... or whatever. That was the big thing for the kids, to go to a Saturday afternoon movie. That was one of the things you really look forward to.

McNeil: Was that the Flash Gordon type? Was he one of the ones?

Ciocca: Yes, Flash Gordon was one. I can remember him, and the Phantom, and there was... uh, you know, some westerns, they had a few westerns the same way. But

that was one of the big things, to see how the serials ended. You were more interested in the serials than you were in the movie.

McNeil: Yeah, I've seen some Flash Gordon. I've seen one of the serials of the Flash Gordon stuff and it's... it's hysterical! ha ha ha.....

Ciocca: It probably is, but it wasn't for us! Ha ha ha...

McNeil: It's great!

Mrs. Ciocca: It was exciting and dangerous!

Ciocca: Yeah, it was...

McNeil: Yeah, we couldn't wait for the end, either. We just wanted to see what was really going to happen!

Ciocca: That's right!!

Mrs. Ciocca: It's amazing how they always managed to get out of it. Here's this thing that's falling down on him, and at the end of the serial... and the next time they escaped. How? There's always some way to escape.

Dodson: But each episodes sort of left you with the hero or heroine in some big mess so you had to go back next Saturday.

Ciocca: Yeah, right.

Mrs. Ciocca: Very definitely! Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Come back and pay your dime, incidentally, to see it.

McNeil: Oh yeah, how did movie prices go about then? Were you conscious of prices raising as they did? Or... what was that like?

Ciocca: Well, it wasn't like today. I mean, your prices didn't raise a nickel at a time. Maybe it went from ten to fifteen cents over a period of five years. But it was still gradual, you'd squawk when they went up a nickel, but you'd get over it in time. Nothing like today where they go up from I don't know, I don't go to shows very often... when I go and pay three dollars I can't believe it! But everything was a lot slower. Inflation was a lot slower, very slow in those days.

Dodson: Do you see much difference in the type of movies now and the type in the thirties?

Ciocca: Yes, oh man, no... yes! Yes, quite a bit! I don't know, I think they just quite reached the limit now. It took them a short period of time, I think, to go from the movies I saw in my time, to what you see today! They've gone, I think, as far as they could possibly go. I don't see how they could go any further.

Mrs. Ciocca: But I think they're more for intelligent persons today. Really, I think basically, the pictures they produced today are for a more intelligent person. Because the average pictures are so dull... the only... there are so few. Like Gone With the Wind, I mean that to me is one in a million! One in ten million!

They didn't produce that kind of picture that are for the sophisticated person. They were, you know, every movie was exactly the same... with different stars but the same plot. And maybe they changed the words a little bit but that was all.

Ciocca: I agree.

McNeil: I wanted to know... ha ha ha... you guys may balk. I wanted to know what kind of crowds that you guys did at night way back when. I mean, what kind of trouble would you guys get into? And did you ever get caught? Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Uhm, we didn't do nothing really mean.

McNeil: Oh, no.

Ciocca: I mean, nothing like doing things bad. uhm, oh... like I say, Halloween night was the night. I mean, a typical farm community where you wouldn't steal anything from anybody. Unless it was a watermelon... unless it was something you could eat. Now, we used to snatch a watermelon once in a while. One guy would keep the farmer occupied in a conversation, if he sees a white dog walking through. And the guy says, "No." And then he'd say, "Well it's about so big..." while the other one is casing the watermelong, finding the biggest one he could see. And when the stars came out, that's when we pulled the raid on the watermelong patches. I'd remember where the biggest one was, and that's the one we're going to get.

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: I mean that sort of thing. Yeah, that was quite uh, you looked forward to doing that. But I don't think he'd really miss that watermelon.

McNeil: What kind of pranks did you guys pull? I knew you had to... ha ha ha...

Ciocca: On Halloween night, yeah we did. In fact, in your picture there you'd see a stand, what I called Mr. Walker's vegetable stand. Well, we used to kind of pull dirty tricks on Mr. Walker. We'd go down in there and especially on Halloween time, tomatoes seemed to be ripe and he'd have all kinds of tomatoes on the back of his uh, his stand. So we'd find a way of getting in there and we'd take all the tomatoes and pile them outside.

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: And we'd go up in there and bang on Mr. Walker's door and say, get him out of bed, and say, "Mr. Walker, somebody's out there swiping all your tomatoes!" So he'd go down there like a shot and see all the tomatoes sitting outside on his stand. Aww, we didn't do anything really bad. He just had to put them all inside again.

McNeil: Ha ha ha... Would you ever do anything like that when you went downtown? Just... you know...

Ciocca: No, no we never did get into any trouble downtown... well, the police were a lot more lenient in those days than they are today. I mean, I remember one time when me and this kid we used to... we'd decide we were going to race, you know? A lot of kids do.

We started down Ventura Boulevard. You can imagine Ventura Boulevard today. Well in those days, there weren't so many cars. But we started about Coldwater Canyong and we'd decide we were going to race. And we'd get going down Ventura Boulevard toward Van Nuys at about... oh, I don't know... about as fast as a little Ford could go... about 80 miles per hour. We were going side-by-side. Well, a motorcycle cop pulled us over and I'd never forgot this poor guy. He said, "What are you guys trying to do? Kill yourself?" Tears were running down his eyes, going so fast on that motorcycle with the wind hitting him in the face. Ha ha ha... he said, "What are you doing?" "No", we'd say, "we're just taking these girls home." He says, "Eighty-five miles per hour and you're taking them home?" He says, "You'll never get them home at that rate!" Well anyway, you know, we lied. He says, "Well, I'm going to have to give you guys a ticket." O.K. So he writes us a ticket. We were going about eighty- whatever it was, and he wrote us for 45 miles per hour. Now, you know, just like I say, in those days there really... it wasn't really as dangerous at it might seem today. Because there wasn't that much traffic. And I don't think there was three signals between Coldwater and Van Nuys Boulevard so you really weren't doing anything wrong except going too fast.

McNeil: What about Mulholland Drive? Was that then what it is now?

Ciocca: Well, I...

Dodson: Perhaps, Kathy, you'd better say what it is now for the records.

[laughter]

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah! Reveal! Ha ha ha... I'll tell you some better places... ha ha ha....

McNeil: Ha ha ha... well, nowadays mostly... uhm, something else. Nowadays, kids go up there and race. They'd race cars up there and a lot of times they'd go up and watch the stars, you know... ha ha ha... sit and moonlight in their cars and everything. Did they do that then?

Ciocca: Oh, probably more so.

McNeil: Really?

Ciocca: That was the place where everybody went, was Mulholland Drive, because there were very few houses up there. And there were all kinds of spots you could pull up to look all over the valley. It had a wonderful view. And that was the place to go. You had a girl and you wanted to park somewhere, you'd go up Mulholland Drive. Because it had a beautiful view and no cars, no people. Except once in a while the cops come by and shine the lights on you and say, "Hey what are you doin'?" What do you think I'm doing? Ha ha ha...

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: But other than that, uh, that was the same in those days. I guess it hasn't changed a bit.

Mrs. Ciocca: And everybody else went to Hansen Dam and Dexter Park.

Ciocca: Well, yeah, they had the Dam...

Mrs. Ciocca: But now you can't... too populated. But not in those days.

McNeil: Really?

Ciocca: The other dam was what they used to call Poplar [?] Lake, it was a nice place up there above Hansen Dam. But they lost that during the flood of 1938, it destroyed that.

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, they used to have dances,I forgot about that!

Ciocca: Poplar Lake ...?... there.

Mrs. Ciocca: Not any more! But they used to have Poplar [?] Lake in the 40's. They used to have dances out there.

Ciocca: But not the lake.

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh no, but they had the place that...

Ciocca: The lake wasn't there, before Hansen Dam. They built Hansen Dam because of the flood of '38. When the Tujunga Dam and the Pacoima Dam were full of water and the...and they had the spill way wide open and the water was going over the top of the dam. And that's what actually washed everything down here, these two Tujunga washes. The big Tujunga wash in North Hollywood, and the little Tujunga wash which is just the Hollywood Freeway, were both flooded because there was just no way to hold the water back up there once the water were full.

So they built the Hansen Dam as catch basin, to catch all that overflow in case they had another heavy rain. The same as the Sepulveda Dam, they built that as a catch basin. To catch the water that was coming down from the mountain and the area northwest. Well, they never did have a rain since they built Sepulveda Dam. And so, consequently, there's never been any water in Sepulveda Dam since they built it. But originally it was built as a catch basin because there were so many houses that were dropped into the Los Angeles River. I used to go down there in '38 and watch them just fall into the river. The water was eating up all the dirt away clear back to Ventura Boulevard and all the houses actually fall into the river. And that's why they tried to build all these catch basins, to hold back the water.

McNeil: What about football games? I'm sure that you and your friends had some really exciting times playing football. Could you tell us about that?

Ciocca: Yeah, we had some goodies! Ha ha ha... We had that field there on the corner of Fulton err, Ethel and Burbank. And there was the big Mrs. K there and had a house. And she had this big lot there, she must've had four or five acres that she never used. So we just made a football field out of it, a hundred yards long and it was just like a regular football field. And we had a team, you know, the old farmboys, rugged! A couple of guys, Mexican buddies of mine, ...?... I'll never forget them, boy were they good! And uh, we had a record football team and we just moseyed down the valley, taking on other kids that had teams. We'd take them down there and had a re-

gular schedule. Everybody would play each other and we had our field. And that's where they'd come because that was the only place that had a regular hundred yard football field, regulation size. We had a pretty good football team. I don't think we lost. We got beat by some bunch in L.A. one time. They brought out the dump truck, I'd never forget 'em. A whole bunch of guys, they were bigger than we were and they beat us. Ha haha... but other than that, we had a pretty good team.

McNeil: What about school rivalries? Were there any... especially with the high schools, did you have any big rivalries? Say with any high schools in the valley? Or the ones from Los Angeles or anything?

Ciocca: Oh boy, are you kidding? That was the... there were only four high schools in the valley. It was uh, North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Canoga and San Fernando and that was it, there were no other high schools. And that was our league. And of course we included Eagle Rock because they needed five. But that was our league. But the rivalry between Van Nuys and San Fernando, and Van Nuys and North Hollywood was something else! That was the big deal! I mean, the night before the game, these crazy kids would go through Van Nuys just like... like the Mardi Gras. And they would... it was a big thing! For weeks ahead of time, they would be building up the football games between these high schools! Because there were just a few of us. And oh yeah, we had a lot of fun and nobody would miss the game. I mean there was a lot of school spirit in those days. I think a lot more than today. 'Cause I went to a few high school football games with my boys. And

no way did we used to do like they do today! Today they marched around the track while they're playing football. I can't believe a football game... everybody was walking around the track! While everybody was playing football, nobody watched them play football. There was no way it was like that in my days!

Mrs. Ciocca: We couldn't believe that, we really trully couldn't! I mean because it was so fierce between the competition between the four high schools, and who was going to be the best. And when we went back to see one last Van Nuys High School game, and that's all ... there were.... there were noone! Noone was interested in that football game! They were all just parading around... walking around and around the track, you know, that were outside the field. We really couldn't... and they used to always have a dance after the game! Don't they?

Ciocca: Well yeah of course. And they pulled pranks on each other. You know, like, we would go to North Hollywood and write V. N. right in the middle of their 50 yard line and...

Mrs. Ciocca: The Best!

Ciocca: Well, we'd put a little fuel on there and set it on fire...

McNeil: My alma mater, there!

Ciocca: Is that right?

McNeil: Yeah, ha ha ha...

Ciocca: So they'd be sure and see it at football time. They

couldn't cover it up! But I mean those things like that, you know.

McNeil: What else did you do? What kinds of other pranks did you pull for rivalry? This is interesting.

Ciocca: Oh...

Mrs. Ciocca: One thing, it was nothing. I can honestly say this. In my era, in his era, up until World War II, there wasn't anything that was malicious. Mischievous, yes, but nothing malicious like it is today. And that's... nothing was malicious. No, that's not the way you uh.... nothing was malicious!

Ciocca: There was no destruction of property. I mean, there was little things that, like that grass thing. But who could you hurt? But I mean...

Mrs. Ciocca: Well, like one time, we had the hay ride. Oh, and this was bad! Well, where do we dump the hay? Right in front of the girls' gym... ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Now that was quite...

McNeil: Not at your school!

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, yes we did! Ha ha ha... we'd go to school the next morning, uhm, Monday morning and there we'd see all that hay. Oh, they had a horrible time! We didn't know who did it.

Ciocca: That was something that they had a lot of in the old days, hayrides. I guess they don't have it today.

McNeil: What would you do on a hay ride?

[laughter]

McNeil: You ride on hay! Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: A lot of singing and kids were yakking, you know, what the kids do when they get together.

Mrs. Ciocca: And never ...?...

Ciocca: Never a dull moment.

McNeil: Did you have bonfires? And things like that?

Mrs. Ciocca: Uh hmm.

Ciocca: Oh yeah. Like I say, that riverbed there, you couldn't believe what a beautiful place it was. Back of the college there, poplar trees, big trees. We used to build bonfires . Well there'd be at least twelve of us that go down there. And we'd build this bonfire and everybody would bring either bread or weenies. Because the rest of this stuff we just gone out and get, corn, sweet potatoes, and whatever else we needed we just went out and got it.

McNeil: Shame...

Ciocca: And as long as they got the uh, bread and weenies, and we were at the age when you'd drink a little beer if you could get it. And I remember people used to ride by on horses. And this... I'll never forget this one man... There used to be a lot of horse people down around the Riverside Drive. And

they used to ride to the wash at night. And they came across us one night and this man was so impressed with us kids there with the fire. He says... there were about eight of them... adults... and he says, "When you kids are going to have another one of these, please let me know. Or set a date when you're going to have another and I'll bring everything. You don't have to bring nothing! Just let me know when it is and I'll bring everything that you'll need. So we could join you!" It was such a picturesque scene that he wanted to uh, you know, enjoy it too.

McNeil: Did that happen?

Ciocca: No, it never did! Ha ha ha... They were too old for us!

[laughter]

McNeil: Uhm, what about school mascots? Did you ever do anything like stealing the other school's mascot? Or things like that?

Ciocca: Well, didn't have any! We were the wolves and North Hollywood were the huskies. And nobody had a wolf and nobody had a husky!

[laughter]

Mrs. Ciocca: Except the guys.

Ciocca: No, there were any live mascots as I remember, no.

Dodson: As long as you were talking about that, did you go into prom queens and homecoming queens, and all that

sort of thing?

Ciocca: Yeah, we had all the proms and queens and all that, right. The same kinds of things that they have today. The proms and the crowning queens, and the... it was the same things, same as today.

McNeil: Would you like uhm, say for homecoming, would you have homecoming parades with floats and things like that?

Ciocca: Yes, we had a homecoming... it was always a football game. I remember it was a homecoming game and that's where everything took place. It was a homecoming football game and we had a special section in the bleachers that was reserved for the graduates... your homecoming graduates. And that's real neat. They had the parade, and a lot of times they would parade the graduates around... so everybody could see 'em! Ha ha ha... The older ones in the front and as you... as the younger you were, the farther back you were. But I could remember that, yeah, that was quite a thing. And we had a... then we also had the faculty... when I was a senior, we had the faculty-senior baseball game. And the whole school turned out to watch the faculty play the seniors in a baseball game!

McNeil: What about when you were a child and you had... I assumed that you had to go to school on a school bus. Was that a fairly common thing?

Ciocca: Yes, that's about the... there was a... I went to school on bus. The bus used to come by... in fact, mostly kids in the outline area. I think you had

to live two miles from school, or more, in order to get the bus. But most of the kids were in the outline area, and the school busses, there were very few school busses for the amount of kids we had, yeah. We had approximately, as I remember it, nine hundred... when I went to high school, we had nine hundred kids in high school.

McNeil: Uh hmm.

Mrs. Ciocca: That was the whole school. Now you've got about three thousand in one grade!

McNeil: Yeah, nine hundred graduating.

Mrs. Ciocca: 'Cause I had done on the corner of Nordhoff and Woodleigh and they said... and the bus picked me up in the morning to go to Van Nuys High. And brought me home... I didn't have hardly any after school acgivities as a result because I had to be there to catch the bus to get home. That was the only bad thing.

McNeil: Would they have any kind of after-school activities? What would they have after school? High school.

Ciocca: Uhm...

McNeil: Do you remember?

Ciocca: Uh, yeah, outside of sports... naturally we had all the sports but I was... my major in high school was agriculture, naturally. What could be easier for me? And vocational ed. And I had a wonderful teacher. I'll never forget him, his name was Mr. Cleveland[sp?].

As I understand it he's at Pierce College now. And I don't know is he's the head of a department or what. But the last I heard, he was at Pierce anyway... head of ...?... or whatever. But anyway, he was my agriculture teacher and this was the first place... school, that he taught... originally from Montana, he taught Van Nuys was his first school. And I was in judging, animal judging. And we used to go to the Pomona Fair and different fairs , and the L. A. stock yards and we used to judge cattle. And mostly, mine was in cattle. And we had all different animals and we had different kids which specializes with different animals. We went to different fairs, and the Great Western Livestock showed up in L. A. and ... but that was our after school, mostly my afterschool activity.

McNeil: Do you have anything to add to that?

Mrs. Ciocca: G.A.A. for girls, I remember when we... that's about all I could remember.

McNeil: What's G.A.A.?

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, Girls Athletic Association.

McNeil: Oh, so it would be after school activity?

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah. That was the... you had the basketball or bowling.

Ciocca: Or archery.

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, I didn't get into the archery.

Mrs. Ciocca: No, I didn't go for archery.

Mr. Ciocca: I remember the girls sitting out there, trying to hit that bale of hay with a little bow and arrow! Ha ha ha...

Mrs. Ciocca: I didn't go for that, I went for bowling or basketball. That was what I did, so.

McNeil: Oh, uhm, let's see... what else... Well, let's get off that for a minute and go back to say like the home life. I was wondering about... what about things like bed linen? And things like that, especially if you lived on farm. Would those be hard to come by? Or...?

Ciocca: ?

McNeil: Bed linens.

Ciocca: Oh, bed linens! No, no. You had these big old four-posted beds and the linens were cheap...

Mrs. Ciocca: Tell them about your bathtub!

McNeil: Really?

Ciocca: Bathtub, we had an old bathtub. I wish I had one today and I'd give the one I got today! One of these huge things that have legs on it, you know. It stood off the floor, six inches off the floor and it was about eight foot long.

Mrs. Ciocca: It was!

Ciocca: And you know, I used to get in there and fall asleep in that thing!

[laughter]

Ciocca: I'd wake up cold and the water freezing!

Mrs. Ciocca: It was eight feet long!

Ciocca: Yeah, and oh what a wonderful way of taking a bath!

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah, ha ha ha...

Ciocca: The thing I have here in this house now, I never use it because to me it's not big enough.

McNeil: What about when you were a kid, did you have hot and cold running water for your bathtub? Or did you have to fill it up with hot water from the stove?

Ciocca: No, we had uh, we had a regular hot water and uhm, hot and cold. We had... there got to be a time we couldn't run the water. And naturally you didn't have sewers in those days, you had cesspools. Well during the early 40's, as I was saying before, the water level got so high that we had to disconnect the... all the water that was connected to the cesspool except for the toilet. And we had it disconnected in pipes running out into the field. All the bath water, dish water, everything had to be run out into the field. Because as I say, the water table was right near the surface.

McNeil: Would, uhm, your mother or... I don't know if you had

any sisters, did you have any sisters?

Ciocca: No.

McNeil: Would your mother make a lot of clothes? Or did you buy most of your clothes? In stores...

Ciocca: No, my mother never did make me clothes. In fact, I was the kind of kid that I don't think I would've wore it to school if she had made it.

[laughter]

Ciocca: You know what a kid is, homemade? Forget it!

Dodson: You had your pride!

Ciocca: Yeah, I must've because there was no way I would've wore anything homemade.

McNeil: Oh, I guess it was different... ha ha aha

Mrs. Ciocca: No, it was just him. He was different.

[laughter]

McNeil: Did you... Was it a big thing say like ordering things out of a Sears catalog? Did you do a lot of that? Or did you buy most of your things out of stores in the area?

Ciocca: I was a nut over this one... for the Montgomery Ward Catalog. I used to love to get that catalog and go through it. And I used to send off...and I still have things that I've gotten through the

Montgomery Ward Cata... that shirt that I bought thirty years ago were at least... and more! And I got it through the Montgomery Ward Catalog! Yeah, I used to love to get that catalog and I got it every year.

Dodson: Are those shirts still wearable?

Ciocca: They're like brand new! I could show you a corduroy shirt that I paid $3.95 that I got through Montgomery Ward that you couldn't buy it for fifteen or twenty dollars today!

McNeil: Was that a fairly typical thing? People buying things from the catalog, then?

Ciocca: Well, especially the ranch people. Anybody, all our ranch hands that worked there, most everything they bought, they bought through the catalog. It was just a matter of... they had no way for transportation except for the Red Car which was a half a mile away from our home. And so there was no way to get into the town. It was quite a chore. I mean, you had to plan in advance, when you had to go to Van Nuys. Which was our closest city... so most of them bought through the catalog because it was a lot easier and this is cheap.

Mrs. Ciocca: And the Jewell T Company used to come to the house. The Jewell T, the Jewell T man for your mother, for coffee and spices and things.

McNeil: Oh! So there'd be a man who'd come to the house to sell spices, and tea, coffee, and things like that?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, and we had a regular bread man that would come around every other day. And so you had a lot of those people that sold... the fish man! I'd never forget the fish guy that used to come around about once a week. In a regular fish truck that he had fished while you buy it from him.

McNeil: Wow! What about the kids at school? Did most of them had catalog-bought, or city-bought, or store-bought clothes?

Ciocca: Most of them lived close to town, close enough to walk... would go into Van Nuys. Yeah, there were just a few stores, J.C. Penney was probably the most popular store as far as clothes went. But the ones that lived near the city... of course there were a lot of people that during the tough times where they ...the clothes naturally had to be made, and they had to be passed down from one kid to another. But there wasn't a lot of stuff bought. There wasn't that much money around to buy.

McNeil: What about things like you'd have around the house? Did you have a lot of knick knacks around the house? Was that a typical thing? To have like just go out an buy a new vase or something?

Ciocca: Well, yeah, my mother was quite the...

[tape 3 side 1 ends]

Dodson: Kathy, you were asking something about a gumball machine.

Ciocca: Well, you know, you were thinking of things that you

used to do. And there wasn't a lot to do, until you see a gumball machine screwed into the wall. You'd flex your muscle and see who was the brute of the bunch, you know, you see who could pull it out of the wall and set it on the ground. And that was, you know, to see about your strength.

Mrs. Ciocca: Football team!

Ciocca: Yeah, of course you'd be in a sports team. You know, you didn't break the gumball machine. He just set it on the ground so the guy had to screw it back on.

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Now, up until tonight, I had believed that the older generation of the valley never really got into any devilment at all. This is the first time that I've ever heard that they did any...ha haha ha...

Ciocca: Oh, they had their time! They had their time, too.

McNeil: Why don't you tell us about your dinner bell?

Ciocca: Oh, we, yeah, we used to have a cow bell. A big brass cow bell. My brother still has that, I'd like to have it, really. It was a way of calling the hired hands for breakfast, lunch... err, breakfast! It wasn't lunch, I keep saying lunch. In those days it was breakfast, dinner, and supper. They had three meals a day, and I mean it was the whole family. You had a full meal and then you'd ring this bell. And that meant come to the table. Well, they rang it ten to six and ten to six at night. And people in the neighborhood used to use that bell because it

had quite an echo to it. They'd get up by it in the morning and tell their kids, "Now you get home when you hear that dinner bell up there on that farm!" And it was quite a... we had a housekeeper that... a cook, really, and she was quite punctual with the time on that thing. So everybody got so that they could trust her ringing that bell.

McNeil: Ha ha ha... How is she so punctual? Did she have her own little clock or something?

Ciocca: No, but she was just one of those kind that you ate lunch at noon, and dinner at six, and breakfast at six. I mean, it was just a 'round the clock thing. And you better be there. You come and get it or you go without.

McNeil: What was your cook's life like? Was she uhm, I was just wondering about the kitchen. How large was the kitchen and how much would she have to cook? And things like that.

Ciocca: Well, uhm, the kitchen was quite large. We had the kitchen and then we had what we called the dining room, which was off... which was another room from the kitchen. And that's where we ate. And it was... You'd figure there was uh... four, five... there was my mother, my father... us two boys and four ranch hands. So we had eight of usaround the table. And whatever kid in the neighborhood that happened to be there that day. Because my dad couldn't resist telling the kids, that any kid that was there, that "You sit down and you eat with the rest of us." And the kids were just tickled to death, you know. Because naturally, we had a lot of... these kids

used to go crazy over this French bread. Because that's what we ued, French bread, and the kids loved it! French bread... and they liked cheese. And you know my dad, Italian people, they're quite noted for putting on the food... more than you can eat. Well that's the way he always was. And these kids were... they always make it a habit of being around there around noon, because they know my dad would tell them to sit down and make them eat.

Dodson: What did you use to have for breakfast, typically?

Ciocca: Breakfast is usually strictly eggs and meat, and hash brown potatoes. Very little cereal, as we know cereal today... I don't remember 'em hardly having... They had a lot of mush, which is oatmeal, which we call mush. Oatmeal, or cream of wheat... meat, and potatoes, and eggs. Very little cold cereal. I don't think they ever had cold cereal. And I'll never forget the first time, speaking of breakfast, that the electric coffee pot came out. This cook makes us coffee on the electric coffee pot and she sets it on the table. So, the guys were having their breakfast. Pretty soon one guy thought the coffee was a little cold, so he gets the electric coffee pot and he goes over and he sets it on the stove and put it on full blast.

[laughter]

That was the end of the electric coffee pot! This cook could have killed him!

Dodson: You had your main meal at noon, did you? Your dinner?

Ciocca: Yeah, I would say noon. Yes, noon would be their main meal. And uh, although they worked all hours those people, men in those days. There was one thing they all be done. After noon, after you had your lunch... it doesn't matter what kind of job you had there... ranch hands or the ...?... You always took an hour nap after lunch time. So you ate at noon, and nobody usually went back to work until two o'clock in the afternoon.

Dodson: Was that true generally? Or just on the ranch?

Ciocca: Uh, mostly on the ranch. I think a lot of the foreign people, the people who came... immigrated from Europe, were used to that time and that was quite common over there. You always took a nap after lunch time. And my dad never expects anybody to work after they ate... until at least an hour.

Dodson: I know that the siesta idea is still prevalent in Italy and Spain particularly, but I just wondered whether that was true in the more urban sections. Would Van Nuys businesses, for instance, close?

Ciocca: No, no, no that... this was strictly country style. I mean, strictly the laboring class, I think, would resort to that. Not , not in the town or anybody in business. No, it was strictly an all-day thing, open all day.

McNeil: Where would you get your bread from?

Ciocca: We used to get bread from what they called a San Fernando Valley Baking Company.

McNeil: And they made French bread?

Ciocca: Oh... they were specialized in French bread. And I'll never forget it was wonderful French bread, too. But it was really good! These kids in the neighborhood used to love it because their folks never bought French bread. It was always sandwich breads. So they loved French bread and so they'd come over to the ranch because they know we have a lot of French bread.

Dodson: I though maybe you'd answer that you'd cook... bake bread! That wasn't true? You always bought your bread?

Ciocca: Yeah, we never baked. We always... we all... I never remember baking. All our bread was purchased at... I'll never forget, the San Fernando Valley Baking Company in Pacoima. I don't know if it's still there but that's where we used to get it.

McNeil: What about cheeses? Were the cheese made in the valley? Or... Did they have cheese-making in the valley, I guess is what I'm trying to get at.

Ciocca: No. I think most of the cheeses came from uh, from the east as much as today, from Wisconsin... those areas that are dairy states. Here we didn't... most of... most of our milk products here went into butter or milk. Our milk was all distributed to what they called Edgemar Farm which is in Venice. Mainly in Venice... and it was all... all our milk was distributed in that era...area. But most of it was distributed as raw milk or pasteurized. And in butter.

McNeil: Well, mentioning Venice, I 'd immediately thought of the beach. And you said you went to the beach a lot. I was just wondering, what would you wear when you went to the beach? Ha ha...

Ciocca: Well, uh, just like you do today. We uh, I don't think the beach attire has really changed.

McNeil: Well uh, I mean did they have one piece suits for men or...?

Ciocca: Yeah. No, they didn't have tops. That was before our time.

McNeil: No tops?

Ciocca: No. They had... they wore just about the bare minimum. Of course the girls wore a little more than they do today... ah ha ha... But the boys didn't.

McNeil: Would the girls be wearing like, one piece bathing suits or would they be longer? More like skirts, then? Or what?

Ciocca: No, they were tight suits but they were mostly one piece. Very seldom do they have two piece suit in my time.

McNeil: No, no. I mean, would they have a skirt on the uhm...

Ciocca: No.

McNeil: They would be just regular one piece suits then?

Ciocca: Just a regular one piece suit. Like, like... you see on the swimmers for the Olympic games?

McNeil: Yeah?

Ciocca: That's the type of suit they wore.

Mrs. Ciocca: But they had little skirts, too, honey.

Ciocca: Not that I've noticed.

Mrs. Ciocca: Not long ones, but I mean they look like little shorts. Yeah, like a little short. Yeah, uhh hmm.

Ciocca: ....?....

Mrs. Ciocca: In the 50's, I mean in the 40's...

Ciocca: Do you see all those gals in that book?

Mrs. Ciocca: Yeah, I saw those. I'll show you those. But they used to have the little skirts. I mean when the two pieces came in.

Ciocca: Oh, the fifties! I'm going back to the 30's.

McNeil: Yeah, I meant way back.

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, no.

McNeil: Because I was just, you know, wondering what it was like. And I've seen the bathing beauties, right? They'd come out with those little skirts and things.

Dodson: I think maybe you were thinking about a much earlier

period, Kathy, when the bathing suits were drastically different.

Ciocca: Yeah, when they wore these long skirts, sure.

McNeil: Oh, I see. Oh, well, yeah... these do have a kind of skirt on them. That's more of what I was talking about. You know, like little shorts.

Ciocca: Uh, here's a good example of what Ocean Park Beach looks like... when I was a kid. Not a soul in sight! Imagine that today.

McNeil: Did they keep their beaches clean? Did they have a regular ...

Ciocca: Oh, the beaches were spotless. In the old days the sand was white. They had... they raked them every night, or they used some sort of machine that would. Then they had the beachcombers.

McNeil: Yeah?

Ciocca: The beachcombers would go out and shift the sand, you know, for coins. But the beaches were actually a lot cleaner. There was also a lot less people, there weren't that many people in those days.

McNeil: Yeah, that's true.

Ciocca: You could go... that was our big thing. We'd go down there on a Sunday, where today I wouldn't dare go down on a Sunday in the summertime. But Sunday wasn't much different than any other day of the week.

McNeil: How would you get down there?

Ciocca: Well, [cough] pardon me, there was no San Diego Freeway, and there wasn't a Sepulveda Boulevard. And the only way you could get over the mountain was Beverly Glen. That was the only way to the... from this end of the valley, it was over Beverly Glen, down Beverly Hills and that's the way you get to the ocean.

McNeil: What was Beverly Hills like?

Ciocca: Beverly Hills was uh, it was exclusive, just like it is today...

McNeil: Yeah.

Ciocca: ...and actually they had the big mansions. You know, the movie people really built their houses in those days... Of course they didn't cost what they do today, they could do it a lot easier. Taxes... And they had some beautiful places there. Large estates... I mean it goes to the acres and acres.

McNeil: What about... back to the beach... what about surfing? Is that a sport out here at all? Did people surf very much?

Ciocca: Nope, that was really nothing. Nobody even heard of it. They had paddle boards but nobody ever got what is known as a surf board today. They had a well, what they called a surf board was a thing you just lay on. You can't stand up at all. You just lay on to keep from sinking. But no, there was no

surfing like today. Never saw anybody surf when I was a kid.

Mrs. Ciocca: They fooled around in inner tubes.

Ciocca: Fooled around in inner tubes, right, and things like that. But there was no riding the waves like they do today.

McNeil: What about something like playing tennis? Was that more restricted to the Beverly Hills people or did they have that in the valley at all? I know it was from what I understand, it was an elitist type thing.

Ciocca: Yeah, that was strictly... you were strictly the Beverly Hills crowd if you play tennis. It was... I can't ever remember if there was a tennis court as such in the valley. I don't remember a public court or even in a home.

Mrs. Ciocca: The only thing was, I think they taught it in high school, didn't they?

Ciocca: No.

Mrs. Ciocca: They taught volleyball .

Ciocca: Yeah, but not tennis.

McNeil: What about swimming pools? When did swimming pools move out to the valley? Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: Well, that's another thing. They had swimming pools during the forties. That's as close as I remember, the 40's but there were few and far between. For

somebody who had a swimming pool, everybody knew about it and they'd go in there and swim at night. They didn't even get in to swim.

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Mrs. Ciocca: Oh, but that was for parks, honey. There was no private pools.

Ciocca: Oh, there was one on Fulton and Oxnard. The people had them, a swimming pool. Tell me about it, we got over the fence, we'd get in there at night and splash around.

McNeil: Oh my goodness. What about the parks in the valley? Did you have parks in the 30's? Or 20's?

Ciocca: Yeah, well during the 30's... before that, no. It was so wide open that you... what do you need a park for? If you wanted to picnic, you could go any place. Go up there, anywhere, for a picnic. You really didn't need parks. As such, I mean, where we have to play ball or whatever.

McNeil: Uh hmm.

Ciocca: No, the parks didn't really start until the people, until it started getting crowded. Then it... the parks started coming in. But North Hollywood park, I think, is the first park that I can remember in the valley. It was quite a large one.

Dodson: Kathy, you were about to ask about bootlegging, I think, weren't you?

McNeil: Yeah! It seems to be uh, the school was er... the

ranch was raided for supposed bootlegging... but, uhm, it seems that you did have a wine cellar and didn't the authorities do anything about that?

Ciocca: Well, we were raided one night by the reverend. Didn't I tell you about the reverend?

McNeil: Yeah, you told us about him, but I was just wondering about why they didn't just get you for the wine?

Ciocca: Oh, yes, we made wine. We had that vineyard. But uh, the reason they didn't say anything about the wine even though it was illegal at the time, we had the wine strictly for the people who worked there. It was strictly, you might say a necessity, that's the way they were raised. That's the way their lives was, they had to have wine with their meals. But even though we had all these wine in the cellar, the Internal Revenue, whoever they were, they just said, "Well, as long as you don't sell it, there's nothing wrong. You just go ahead and keep it."

McNeil: Didn't it seem like a number of other people also had their own wine cellars and nobody really ever was arrested for having their own wine?

Ciocca: That's true. It seems like most of them, most of the ranches around there, it seems like they had false bottoms on their chicken coops, which they used to use to store their wine. Everybody it seems like, had a few acres of grapes of some kind or another. And they made their own wine. But it was... they were never punished for it, or arrested for it because of the fact that nobody ever made it for commercial use. It was for their own use. Even though the law was broken to an extent, they were

pretty lax in that respect and they never really bothered people.

McNeil: You said something about chicken coops and the revenuers. Why don't you tell us about that?

Ciocca: Well, it does seem to be the easiest place to hide your wine, was the chicken coops... ha ha ha... I don't know, for some reason they never seemed to take a chicken coop serious, as far as a place you're going to store any forbidden alcohol. So everybody had a false bottom in their chicken coop. Where you could grab a board and pull it up, and here came the whole chicken floor up, and there's usually where your your... wine, it's usually wine, is stored... in the chicken coop. Nobody it seemed like, they never looked in the chicken coop.

McNeil: What about something like bathtub gin? Was that a fairly common thing? Or was it... what was that?

Ciocca: No, that bathtub... no. What you were referring to as bathtub gin that was strictly used to make for commercial use, mostly. And nobody around here ever, I can remember or heard of, you know, producing that for commercial use. Not very... I never heard of anybody ever making that, though.

Dodson: Were there many stills in the valley during the Prohibition era, to your knowledge? Or was it just mostly making the wine?

Ciocca: Oh, there were a few. I've heard of a few. Uh, there was uh... I've heard of one, one time, on the riverbed I was refering to... where the freeway

is now, they used to use that as a storage area. They make uh, this illegal liquor and then they'd take it down there in this uh, wash, and bury it in the sand. It was just a sandy riverbed. And that's where they used it for storage. And nobody ever thought to dig down in this riverbed to find the liquor. But I've heard of one, quite a big operation, it was up near Laurel Canyon as I remember, Laurel Canyon and the riverbed there. But it was strictly for commercial and they finally caught them. Ha ha ha...

McNeil: What would happen when they have a big... or how would people set up those big enterprises, like running liquor and things like that? Are you familiar with that?

Ciocca: No, I don't know really what kind of really, an operation they had there, to pass around. But there were so many speakeasy, what they used to call them, down in the cities. You know, you had what they called speakeasy, and they had to know you before they let you in. And they were all over Hollywood and Los Angeles, just like they were in any big city where they had prohibition. And most of this liquor was manufactured in the outlying areas, like here in the valley. And that's where most of it was used, in these speakeasys, down in the city.

McNeil: Hhm... Why don't we go on and say like, the property values of your ranch. How much did it cost you to sell to the Unified District?

Ciocca: Well, the property there in that area, I think... in fact, practically all of it went for a full

$3000.00 an acre. That was the price that the city offered to the people that owned the land, three thousand an acre.

Dodson: We just wondered what that would be worth now.

Ciocca: Well, to give you an idea, I don't know. Today, I would say, I know of some that was sold on Burbank just south of KMPC [?] for $50,000 an acre five years ago. Well, today, you could figure from that, what it would go for.

McNeil: [lets out a whistle] That is pretty amazing!

Ciocca: Yeah, it's gone up quite a bit. My dad, I think I said, my father paid $20,000 for the place when he bought it in 1920. But of course it had the house, and the barn, and the... and the.... It was actually a going ranch at the time.

McNeil: Uhm, what about like air shows, or flying pilots? You were mentioning that you were really scared by some one day. Could you tell us about that?

Ciocca: Well, I don't know. It seems like these guys... well you've seen pictures these flyers and the stunts they did. Well I used to watch them and it's no lie. They had more nerves than they had brains! They would do... you could sit out and watch them almost any day and watch them do loops and spins. And how many times I've seen them crash! Oh, I suppose just around the college there, I've seen one one time went down right in the corner of Ethel and Oxnard. He just buried the thing right in the chicken yard, two guys in it, two men... enough to kill them both.

And I've seen another one buried one on Burbank, this side of Woodman. In fact, when we were kids, we'd watch them stunts and wonder and we'd say, "Well, I wonder how long he's gonna last before he goes down." And it seemed like it was an every day thing. They would take off, with no gas... One time I was feeding the cows, at the ranch here, and I was down in the corral and I looked down at the bottom part of the land there, near Ethel, and I see this airplane sitting in the middle of the field. And the guy was tinkering with the engine. And I thought, what's he doing out there? I walked down there and I said, "What's the matter?" "Oh," he said, "it just conked out." And he was just frustrated and he said, "I've got to get out of here before somebody reports me (to whoever they'd report him to)." He said, "Can you help me?" I said,"yeah, what do you want?" "Well," he said, "I've got to get up the end of the field here and see if I can get this thing going." So he got up the end of the field, so I said,"O.k." You know, adios, good-bye. So he gets that thing and started heading south, right where that big eucalyptus tree (it's still there) on Burbank. He was headed right for it, and he hasn't got this thing off the ground yet. So he shoved it down and taxied back, and he said, "Where can I get some gas?" "Where's the gas station?" Well it's ...the closest one at that time was on Burbank and Woodman, it was about a mile away. So I said, "It's up there." He said, "Can you run me up there to get some gas?" And I said, "O.K." Well, I was thinking he'd get some twenty or thirty gallons. Oh no, he gets five gallons of gas to put in his airplane.

McNeil: Five gallons?

Ciocca: "Is that enough?" And he said, "Well I just have to get back to Glendale." Ha ha ha...

McNeil: Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: So he says, "I can't get this thing... it's too sandy down here. I can't get up off the ground, it's holding me down." So I said, "Come along this hill there, I've got a corral there and it's harder there." So he says, "O.K." By this time there was about five or six of us kids there. You know, all agog at this nut in this airplane. So he says, "O.K. you guys, just hang on to the wings. When I say push you push!" So he wind this thing up as high as he can and he said Push! So we pushed and he started down this alfalfa field. We had alfalfa in there at the time. And again he's heading right for that big eucalyptus tree. But this time he's got it off the ground about three feet.

[all] Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: And I said, "You'll never make it!" Well, I swear, he couldn't have been more than ten feet from that eucalyptus tree and he still haven't cleared half of it! When he banked it on its side, the wings almost hit the ground. And he just missed that eucalyptus tree by oh, he couldn't have missed that more than three or four feet.

McNeil: Oh! Ha ha ha...

Ciocca: The last I saw him, he was getting altitude with five gallons of gas, trying to get to Glendale. I guess he made it, I don't know. Well, there was a

lot of brave guys in those days. And I don't know, they had a lot of nerve.

McNeil: Weren't you in the field one day, and one came down behind you?

Ciocca: Oh yeah, they used to practice landing. Touch-and-go was what they called it. Now, the guys told me, it was what they called touch-and-go landing. And they used to cut their engine and glide down the field, and as soon as they hit the ground, they'd take off again. Well, they used to do it to me out on the alfalfa field. I guess they'd see me out there and said, I'm going to scare this kid half to death! And they would! Because I'd be walking one way and they're coming in from behind me and just as they'd get to me, they'd turn the engine on and rev the thing up and gained altitude again. Well, you know, when you hear one of those things screaming at the back of your head, it would scare anybody! And I used to throw rocks at them and everything else. I'd get so mad at them guys!

McNeil: What about Jeffrey's [sp?] barn? Why don't you tell us about that? The boxing matches...

Ciocca: Oh, yeah, that was very... that was quite a thing in the valley. We had Jeffrey's barn, that was one place you went to get entertained. They had it all strictly boxing. It belonged to James Jeffrey [sp?] you know, used to be the world's champion boxer. Jeffrey's barn, it was strictly amateur. And any kid who thought he was a good boxer, he could always go to Jeffrey's barn and try out. And I knew quite a few of them that went over there and tried out. Ha ha ha... One or two times and that was it! But,

it was just another thing, something to do, some place to go. And that was... that was... we always used to make it once a month, everybody end up over at Jeffrey's barn.

Dodson: That was in Burbank, wasn't it?

Ciocca: Yeah, it was in Burbank. I remember it was on Olive and Burbank somewhere. I really don't know where it was.

Dodson: And that barn now is out at Knott's Berry Farm, I understand?

Ciocca: That's right, Knott's Berry Farm. They moved it lock, stock, and barrel and it's supposed to be exactly like it was when it was in Burbank.

McNeil: What about the gambling ships? You mentioned those before, when we were talking. Could you tell us about that?

Ciocca: Well that was, yeah, they had four or five off the coast. They were anchored three miles out. And it was just a fun thing for the people who could afford it. It's just like people nowadays going to Las Vegas. In those days people went on the gambling ships.

McNeil: What year was this?

Ciocca: This was during the early twenties and thirties. And that was their sport in those days, going out and tango and the lux and the rest of them they head out there... and the... and the... it was just ano-

ther... it was just Las Vegas on the water was what it amounted to.

McNeil: Why did they have it out in the water? Was there any special reason?

Ciocca: Yes, it has to be outside... at that time, a three mile limit was considered open water. So once you're beyond the three mile limit, gambling was legal. And California, and the water adjacent to it was illegal so they had to be at least three miles out.

Dodson: That'd put them on the high seas so that California law didn't apply.

Ciocca: That's right, yeah.

McNeil: Hmm, yeah. Could you tell us more about the air-shows that they had over Van Nuys airport? Say like the endurance flights? And those things...

Ciocca: Oh yeah, they had the stunts and the movie stunt scenes that they used to make over the Van Nuys air-port. And then after the war, this was all before the war. And then after the war they had what they called the Bendix [sp?] air races over the Van Nuys airport. They used to go up Van Nuys airport and back to Cleveland, Ohio. And this is another wild wooly thing where everybody got an ex-wartime airplane and modified it in some ways. They'd add gas tanks and cut the wings off and do anything that would make it go faster. Sometimes they couldn't even get off the ground with those things because they had so much fuel. It was some-thing! Just to go out there and watch these guys and say, "You think you'd get off the ground. You

think you'll make it?" And it was another dare-devil bunch of guys , that's all you could say. they had a lot of nerve

McNeil: What about over at Lockheed? Did they have anything special over there any time?

Ciocca: Well, they used to... they used to have experimental airplanes lot over at Lockheed. You know, they used to always build something there. I remember this one little plane that somebody built. They called it a G.B. [sp?] I'll never forget that thing, he'd took off with that. And he had so much power in that airplane that, that he just started to spin his body... it's like the airplane started spinning with the prop of the plane [meaning unclear]. Can you imagine how fast you'd be spinning? It was a real short plane, all horsepower, and the whole thing started going around. Oooh!

McNeil: Oh, wow!

Ciocca: And naturally, ...?.... what you ....?....

McNeil: What was it like, for the valley, to have Lockheed come in and build up? When did Lockheed come in?

Ciocca: Well Lockheed was the great asset to the valley. That's where everybody come in to work. Lockheed started up... it was about 1938 or '39. It was when the European war started. And that was a boom to the valley! Everybody who wanted a job went to Lockheed. Because you start at 53¢ an hour at the time... which was unheard of! To have a job where you'd get 53¢ an hour. So everybody went to Lock-

heed. Which you had to buy your own little tools, and you went to building those Hudson bombers [sp?] at the time... they called them Hudson bombers. And the Ventura bombers, those two planes they were building at the time. And everybody went to work at Lockheed. All the guys that were getting out of high school, that's the first place you'd headed for is Lockheed. And it was actually a boom to the industry because there was nothing here in the valley. You either work at the studios, or you work at Lockheed at the time. There was really nothing else. There was no General Motors, there was no I.T.T., nothing!

McNeil: Well, that about does it for my questions right now, ha ha ha... do you have any...?

Dodson: Well I, no... Well I think that probably, ha ha ha... we have pretty well exhausted the situation for the for the present. And we certainly are grateful to you, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Ciocca, allowing us to stay so long and answering so many questions! This is February 12th, 1977. And as you know, most of the questions were asked by associate Miss Katherine Ann McNeil. Every now and then I said something, Dr. James L. Dodson, curator of the Los Angeles Valley Historical Museum. Thank You.